THE ARISTOCRAT

LOUIS N. PARKER

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

DISRAELI. *A PLAY*
ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN
A PAGEANT-PLAY
ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

DRAKE. *A PAGEANT-PLAY*
ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

POMANDER WALK
NOVELIZED FROM THE PLAY WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. SCOTT WILLIAMS

THE ARISTOCRAT

A PLAY

BY

LOUIS N. PARKER

AUTHOR OF "DISRAELI," "JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN," "POMANDER WALK," ETC.

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TO
SIR GEORGE ALEXANDER

PERSONS

Louis of Olonzac, of Gaillac, Duke of Chastelfranc
Louise, *his Daughter*
Dame Ursula of Beauchastel
The Duchess of Autevielle
Felicien Gibert, Bishop of Carcassonne
Baudouin of Batioz, Marquis of Béassac
Josselin of Bonassac, Count of Avantignan
Jacqueline, *his Wife*
Gautier Lalance
Gaspard Chépy
Toinon Chépy
Augustin-Philibert Duroz
Urbain
Renaud
Bonami, *Foreman of the Jury*
Dufour
Lebrun, *Gaoler*
Jacques, *a Soldier*
Louis II
Jacqueline II
Servants. Soldiers of the National Guard.
Jury. Mob.

SCENES

The First Act takes place on the night of Primidi, 11th Nivose, Year II (Tuesday, Dec. 31st, 1793), in Louis' mansion at Carcassonne.

The Second Act takes place on the night of Nonidi, 9th Thermidor, Year II (Sunday, July 27th, 1794), in the prison of the Rue de Sèvres.

The Third Act takes place on the night of Tuesday, Dec. 31st, 1805, in Louis' apartments in the Place des Vosges, Paris.

THE ARISTOCRAT

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ACT I

A large room in a stately old mansion. At the back, a little to the left, are folding doors admitting to the Duke's private apartment. A little to the right is a tall, heavily curtained window. In the right and left angles of the room open arches admit to a picture-gallery. Below the arch on the right is a great fireplace with, above it, framed in the carving, the portrait of a lovely lady. In the wall on the left are folding doors opening into an oratory. There are a few chairs of the Louis XV period. At the fireplace, in which a great fire of logs is blazing, is a stately arm-chair. The room is lighted by wax candles. It is night. TOINON *is closing the curtains of the window, but remains peering through them. Enter* RENAUD, *a young servant, from the right. He stands watching* TOINON *a moment.*

RENAUD [*Quietly*] Toinon.

TOINON [*Closing the curtains and turning quickly*] Renaud! You startled me!

RENAUD. Why were you watching the Duke's window?

TOINON. I was not. I was watching the square.

RENAUD. What is there to see in the square of Carcassonne at a quarter past eleven on what you call New Year's Eve?

TOINON [*Anxiously*] Renaud! My father is in Carcassonne.

RENAUD. Yes. The Citizen Gaspard Chépy arrived this afternoon.

TOINON. "Citizen"! How dare you use that word in this house?

RENAUD [*Laughing*] I should have said The Representative of the People. The Member of the Committee of Public Safety.

TOINON. Horrible! Their bloodhound!—and he hates our master with a bitter, personal hatred.

RENAUD. Has he no cause?

TOINON [*Distressed*] Ah! My poor mother's story! But if you knew Chépy, you would understand.

RENAUD. I know Chépy. [*Correcting himself*] By repute. And as for your mother, any child would understand. On the one hand, our duke's brother: all that was most elegant and seductive: on the other hand—Chépy.

TOINON. He killed the lovers. A madness of hatred seized him. He, our master's bailiff, raised the peasantry, and burned down our master's castle at Avignon! A ruthless monster!

RENAUD [*Shrugging his shoulders*] The victim of circumstances, Toinon, and—your father.

TOINON. God forgive me, I hope not!

RENAUD [*Coming to her*] Well—judging by your beauty, and the neatness of your ankle——

TOINON. [*Putting the compliment aside*] Ah—! Does his coming mean new trouble to our house?

RENAUD. Not our house. The Duke's, if you like. But you and I are the people, and we're coming out of trouble into the sun.

TOINON. You horrify me!

[*Enter from the right, two footmen, each with a large altar candlestick. They are followed by* URBAIN, *who is carrying a gilt book-rest with a Mass-book. The footmen cross to the folding doors on the left, open one wing, and go into the inner room, where they are seen placing the candlesticks on a little altar. They leave the door open*]

URBAIN. Now, young Renaud; to your post at the door. Our guests will be arriving for the midnight Mass. You have the list of those who are to be admitted?

RENAUD [*With a smile*] I have the list, Urbain. Yes.

URBAIN. To the door with you.

RENAUD [*Impudently*] Keep calm, or you won't be fit for your mummeries.

URBAIN. Mummeries!

RENAUD. Are you going to mass, Toinon?

TOINON. Of course.

RENAUD [*Laughing*] I shall be there. I shall be there. [*Exit L.*]

URBAIN. Jackanapes!

TOINON. He is disquieting. I wish the master would be rid of him.

[*One of the footmen comes and takes the book-rest and book from* URBAIN *and puts them on the altar*]

URBAIN. I wish many things. I wish there were no Mass. I wish—I wish there were no Bishop in the house.

TOINON. The Duke makes no secret of his doings.

URBAIN. Don't I know it? By the way, at the supper after the Mass, where am I to place this Monsieur—Monsieur—what is his plebeian name?

TOINON. Monsieur Gautier Lalance? He is a charming young man, and you can place him anywhere.

URBAIN. Oh, indeed? In my opinion he'll disgrace the whole table.

[*Enter* LOUISE, *L.*]

LOUISE. Who will disgrace the whole table, Urbain?

URBAIN [*In great confusion: with a low bow*] Mademoiselle Louise—!

LOUISE. Who will disgrace the table?

URBAIN. Um—Monsieur Béchamel, the cook, is perturbed about the truffled capon.

[*He goes into the oratory, L., closing the door behind him*]

LOUISE [*Laughing*] He did not mean the capon, Toinon.

TOINON. What does it matter? How beautiful you are to-night!

LOUISE. And to-night that's all that matters. [*With joy*] Monsieur Gautier is coming!

TOINON. That is almost incredible!

LOUISE. Why? He has been very useful to my dear father.

TOINON. But that Monsieur Lalance should be *invited—!* And to-night of all nights!

LOUISE. My father is not ungrateful. My father is an angel.

TOINON. But when he knows—! Oh, Mademoiselle, when your father knows you and Monsieur Lalance have met when he was not present!

LOUISE [*Laughing*] That was your doing!

TOINON [*Appealing to heaven*] And now she accuses me!

LOUISE. No, no! You know I am grateful. You have made two people very happy.

TOINON. But——

LOUISE. There is no "but." Monsieur Gautier will hear Mass with me; he will sup with us; we shall welcome the New Year together. Oh, how could there be a "but"?

[RENAUD *appears in the arch, L.*]

RENAUD [*Announcing*] Monsieur Gautier Lalance.

[*Enter* GAUTIER. RENAUD *lingers*]

GAUTIER [*After a formal bow*] I fear I am ahead of time.

LOUISE [*Similarly*] That is to our advantage, sir.

GAUTIER. If you forgive me, I have nothing to regret.

[RENAUD *shrugs his shoulders, and goes out, L.*]

LOUISE [*With an entire change of manner; with childlike pleasure, giving* GAUTIER *both her hands*] Oh, Monsieur Gautier!

GAUTIER [*Eagerly*] Mademoiselle Louise! [*He touches the tips of her fingers with his lips*]

LOUISE. [*Playfully; indicating* TOINON] Have you nothing to say to our guardian angel?

GAUTIER. Her wings grow daily more perceptible.

TOINON. Don't waste time on me. Dame Ursula will be here in a moment.

LOUISE. My companion since my mother's death.

GAUTIER. I am longing to meet her.

TOINON [*Drily*] When once you've met her, you won't forget her.

LOUISE. Toinon!

TOINON [*Laughing*] Poor Monsieur Gautier! [*With intention*] Well! *I'm* going to look out of window.

[*She buries herself in the curtains of the window*]

GAUTIER [*Earnestly*] Mademoiselle, to-night I must tell your father.

LOUISE [*Alarmed*] Oh!—But will there be an opportunity?

GAUTIER. I must make one. We cannot go on in secret.

LOUISE. We have been very happy in our secret.

GAUTIER. We shall be happier when we have none.

LOUISE. I am not sure. I have made a hidden garden, in which you and I are the only living creatures. It will be a wrench to admit even my dear father into that garden.

GAUTIER. When I have the honour of calling you my wife, we will lock ourselves in that garden again.

LOUISE. I want to live in my dream, sir.

GAUTIER [*Passionately*] But, Louise——!

[*At once* TOINON *becomes alert*]

LOUISE [*Frightened*] Monsieur!

GAUTIER [*Mastering himself*] Mademoiselle!—Believe me, the reality is much more beautiful than any dream.

LOUISE [*Gaily*] Well! Some one is coming to-night who will tell me.

GAUTIER [*Jealous*] Indeed? Who?

LOUISE. Jacqueline. My dearest school friend. She has been married a month; and she swore she would tell me whether the reality was as lovely as the dream.

GAUTIER [*Laughing*] I await her verdict without fear, if she loved the man she married.

LOUISE. She had scarcely seen him until she met

him at the altar. [*Pointing L.*] There—in that room.

TOINON [*Warningly*] Mademoiselle!

GAUTIER [*To* TOINON] Oh! All Carcassonne knows the Duke harbours its good Bishop. [*To* LOUISE] That is another reason why I must speak to-night.

LOUISE [*Anxiously*] You say that so gravely—

GAUTIER. It is a grave moment. France is going through a stern trial; and God only knows what to-morrow may bring.

[*A short pause. Then he speaks still more earnestly*]

Mademoiselle, I love you with the deepest and truest love. I urge you to search your heart, and to tell me whether your father's consent, if I win it, will make you happy; whether you love me in deed and in truth.

LOUISE [*Placing her hand in his*] Monsieur Gautier, I love you with all my heart and soul; and if my dear father should not consent, I shall be unspeakably unhappy.

[TOINON *sobs*]

GAUTIER [*With a great joy; gripping* LOUISE'S *hand*] Ah!—Your father will consent; and we can face the future fearlessly.

[TOINON *darts to the window and peeps between the curtains*]

LOUISE. What is the matter, Toinon?

TOINON [*Blanched with fear*] I thought I heard the rattle of sabres!

[*Enter* DAME URSULA, *R. She stares with haughty amazement at* GAUTIER. TOINON *curtseys, and Exit L.*]

LOUISE [*To* GAUTIER] Dame Ursula of Beauchastel. [*To* URSULA, *shyly*] This is Monsieur Gautier Lalance, of whom no doubt my father has spoken.

[GAUTIER *bows*]

URSULA. The Duke has not done me that honour. Did you say Monsieur de Lalance?

GAUTIER [*Lightly*] No, Madam; there is no "de." I am a mere plebeian.

URSULA [*With grave courtesy*] There must be all sorts in the world, sir, even plebeians. [*To* LOUISE] It was fortunate you were ready to receive this gentleman. [*To* GAUTIER] We were not expecting our guests before half past eleven.

GAUTIER. I ventured to come early, as I am charged by the Mayor with an urgent message for the Duke.

URSULA. I do not think my Lord Duke will condescend to combine business with hospitality.

GAUTIER. Would it not be possible for me to see him now?

URSULA [*Stiffly*] He is dressing, sir.

GAUTIER. Might I not wait on him in his room?

URSULA [*Crushingly*] Sir, he is *dressing!*

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GAUTIER. Perhaps he will be at liberty a moment before the other guests arrive.

URSULA [*Her patience is nearly exhausted, but she restrains herself*] You are unfamiliar with our house-etiquette. It is I who have the honour of receiving our guests. When all are assembled, my Lord Duke will appear; and not before.

GAUTIER. The Mayor's message affects the Duke's guests—

URSULA. Then, sir, he will certainly not receive it, save in their presence.

[URBAIN *and the two footmen come out of the oratory, closing the door behind them. The footmen go out, L.*]

URSULA [*Closing the conversation with* GAUTIER] Forgive me, sir.

[*She meets* URBAIN *at the arch, L., and confers with him a moment. He bows and retires L.*]

LOUISE [*To* GAUTIER, *anxiously, yet half laughingly*] You see?

GAUTIER [*Grimly*] Nevertheless I must speak to-night!

LOUISE. But our guests—!

GAUTIER. By heaven, I'll speak before them all!

LOUISE. Oh! I shall perish of confusion!

GAUTIER. So shall I. But I'll do it!

[URBAIN *reappears in the arch, L.*]

URBAIN [*Announcing*] The Countess of Avantignan.

LOUISE [*With a cry of pleasure, but without moving*] Jacqueline!

[*Enter* JACQUELINE. *Elaborate ceremony between her and* URSULA]

GAUTIER [*Smiling*] Aha? The school friend?

URSULA [*Calling*] Louise.

[LOUISE *meets* JACQUELINE *and makes a deep curtsey*]

LOUISE. Countess!

JACQUELINE [*Similarly*] Mademoiselle!

LOUISE [*Presenting* GAUTIER] Monsieur Gautier Lalance.

[JACQUELINE *barely acknowledges his existence*]

LOUISE [*Impetuously, dropping ceremony, slipping her arm through* JACQUELINE'S, *and taking her aside*] Tell me all about it. Is he the fairy-prince? Are you rapturously happy? Tell me everything Everything! Remember your oath in the garden of Penthemont.

JACQUELINE [*Patting* LOUISE'S *cheek; with great condescension*] Dear, sentimental, little Louise. As if I would insult your young ears with vulgar confidences!

LOUISE [*Stamping her foot*] Traitress! But where is he now? Why is he not with you?

JACQUELINE. My dear child! The fact that we live in a remote country-town is no reason why we should go about together like a grocer and his wife.

LOUISE. Well—when *I* marry!

JACQUELINE [*Suddenly coming out of her shell and speaking with girlish eagerness*] Are you in love?

LOUISE [*Laughing*] As if I would insult your young ears with vulgar confidences!

URBAIN [*Announcing*] The Count of Avantignan.

[*Enter* JOSSELIN. *He salutes* DAME URSULA. *His eyes constantly seek* JACQUELINE]

LOUISE [*To* JACQUELINE] How handsome he is!

JACQUELINE [*Enthusiastically*] He is—! [*She pulls herself up*] Is he?

JOSSELIN [*Bowing to* LOUISE] Mademoiselle—! [*To* JACQUELINE, *with just as formal a bow*] Countess—I trust you have been in supportable health since the day before yesterday.

LOUISE [*To herself*] The day before yesterday!

JACQUELINE [*With extreme languor*] Apart from provincial tedium, I have had nothing to complain of, I thank you.

URSULA [*Calls*] Louise!

[LOUISE *goes to her*]
[*As soon as her back is turned* JOSSELIN *seizes* JACQUELINE'S *hand*]

JOSSELIN [*With eager passion*] I love you!

JACQUELINE [*Similarly*] I adore you!

JOSSELIN. This evening is wasted.

JACQUELINE. The night will make amends.

URBAIN [*Announcing*] Her Grace, the Duchess of Autevielle.

[*Enter the* DUCHESS, *a very old lady, very elaborately made up. She walks with the aid of a jewelled cane*]

DUCHESS [*To* URSULA] Still on your legs, eh? You do wear well.

URSULA. A calm conscience, Duchess.

DUCHESS. Yes; I know. Nothing ever *could* rouse it. [*To* LOUISE] Aha! little Louise. Lord, to think anything can be half as innocent as you look.

LOUISE [*Laughing*] Indeed, Duchess, I hope I don't belie my looks.

DUCHESS. Oh, don't tell me. I warrant we have our little secrets. Ursula, here, looked just as innocent as you, long after she had no right to. [URSULA *bridles*] Heaven bless us, she tries to now. [*The* COUNT *and* COUNTESS *salute her*] Ah! The honeymoon couple. [*To* JACQUELINE] Poor darling. What *is* the use of getting married away from Versailles? There's no one to make love to you. [*She sees* GAUTIER; *to* URSULA] Who's the young man?

URSULA [*Stiffly*] Monsieur Lalance.

[GAUTIER *comes forward and bows*]

DUCHESS. Good-looking young fellow. Fine leg. You may kiss my hand, young man.

GAUTIER [*Bowing over her hand*] With profound respect.

DUCHESS. Damn it, yes; that's all I get, now.

URBAIN [*Announcing*] The Marquis of Béassac.

DUCHESS. Vice triumphant.

[*Enter* BÉASSAC]

BÉASSAC [*Bowing to* URSULA] Dame Ursula! Piety has renewed your youth. Upon my soul it has. [*To the* DUCHESS] Duchess, Duchess, I vow 'tisn't fair. 'Tis midwinter, yet your cheeks are a garden of roses.

DUCHESS. Well, elderly butterfly, how's the gout?

BÉASSAC. And as amiable as ever. [*He bows to* JACQUELINE] [*Speaks to* JOSSELIN] My dear Count, a little while ago I should have been the hawk in the dovecote.

JOSSELIN [*Laughing*] I'm glad that peril has passed.

BÉASSAC. I'm not. [*To* LOUISE] Another dove. [*With a sentimental sigh*] Oh, Tantalus, Tantalus, how I sympathise with you! [LOUISE *laughs merrily*]

DUCHESS. Where's Louis?

URSULA [*Stiffly*] My lord Duke will be here in a moment now. [*She signals to* URBAIN]

DUCHESS. My lord Duke! *I* call him Louis.

URSULA. The privilege of age.

DUCHESS. Why don't you take it, then?

GAUTIER [*To* LOUISE, *laughing*] The plebeian in me is getting nervous.

LOUISE. Why?

GAUTIER. I can't hold my own in this conversation.

LOUISE. If you did, I should no more understand you than I do them.

GAUTIER. Thank heaven.

[*Meanwhile* URBAIN *has beckoned to two footmen. They have stationed themselves on each side of the Duke's door.* URBAIN *has knocked. Now the footmen fling both wings of the door open, and enter* LOUIS. *He is dressed as he dressed for a Court function at Versailles. The footmen go out,* L. URBAIN *remains in attendance at the back*]

ALL. Ah!

LOUIS [*About to salute the* DUCHESS] Duchess—[*He sees* JACQUELINE] Ah, no. To-night there is a bride before whom even you must give way. [*To* JACQUELINE] Countess, to the old only envy is left. [*To* JOSSELIN] Count, I have not even the consolation of thinking you are not worthy of her. [*To* JACQUELINE] My devout wishes. [*To* JOSSELIN] My felicitations. [*To the* DUCHESS] Now, Duchess, I lay my homage at your feet.

DUCHESS. And I would have you observe they have kept their shape.

LOUIS. Why not? They have danced through life on a carpet of hearts.

DUCHESS. Wretch! You are delicious. I shall fall on your neck in a moment.

LOUIS [*To* BÉASSAC] My dear Béassac! Still that tinder [*touching* BÉASSAC's *heart*] here?

BÉASSAC. Alas, Louis; not tinder: cinder.

LOUIS [*Laughing*] I wouldn't trust it near straw. [*To* URSULA, *with a low bow*] Dame Ursula——

URSULA [*With a deep curtsey*] My Lord Duke——

LOUIS [*Continuing his salutations*] And my dear Louise——

LOUISE [*After curtseying; drawing his attention to* GAUTIER, *who has waited modestly in the background*] You have not seen your new guest, sir.

LOUIS [*To* GAUTIER, *who comes forward*] Ten thousand apologies. You are very welcome. I rejoice to put our acquaintance on a less formal footing. [*To the company in general*] Monsieur Lalance is the son of a very worthy man: my former notary. Monsieur Lalance has put himself to much inconvenience on my behalf.

[GAUTIER *protests*]

For when I refused to follow the example of other members of my order, and emigrate——

DUCHESS. France is the best country to die in.

BÉASSAC. France is the best country to *live* in, Duchess.

LOUIS. France is the only country to live *for* and to die *for*. But the—individuals—who are, for the moment, in power, interfered with the amenities, and harassed my good friend the Mayor about my movements.

BÉASSAC. Perquisitions; requisitions; inquisitions! They drive me to distraction.

LOUIS. That is where Monsieur Lalance was so amiable. He has been good enough to transmit the Mayor's suggestions, and to burden himself with my replies [*with a smile*] which, I fear, have often been difficult to deliver.

GAUTIER [*Laughing*] On those occasions I have ventured to modify the wording.

LOUIS [*Laughing*] Ah, diplomat!

GAUTIER. But even to-night the Mayor has entrusted me with——

LOUIS [*Looking round the room*] One moment. [*He calls*] Urbain.

URBAIN [*Coming forward*] My lord?

LOUIS. I do not see His Grace.

URBAIN [*Astonished*] Do you mean the Lord Bishop, my lord?

LOUIS. Whom else should I mean?

URBAIN. I thought—perhaps [*Indicating* GAUTIER] The young gentleman is a comparative stranger, my lord.

LOUIS [*With gentle rebuke*] The young gentleman is my guest.

[URBAIN *bows and retires*]

LOUISE [*To* LOUIS] May I fetch His Grace, sir?

LOUIS. Go, my child. [*To* GAUTIER] Forgive me. You were saying?

[URBAIN *and* LOUISE *go out, L.*]

GAUTIER. I have an urgent message from the Mayor.

LOUIS. Ah, I fear that must wait. [*Pointing to his guests*] The duties of hospitality——

GAUTIER. Forgive me if I insist. It affects your guests as deeply as yourself.

LOUIS. In that case I will ask their permission for you to speak.

GAUTIER. May I not tell you privately? It is bound up with—with another matter—of a—of a personal nature.

LOUIS. That *must* wait. [*To the* DUCHESS] Monsieur Lalance begs permission to deliver a message from the Mayor—— [*He sees the Bishop approaching*] Ah—! [*To* GAUTIER] Presently, sir.

[ALL, *except the* DUCHESS, *rise and turn. Enter from L., the* BISHOP, *leaning on* LOUISE; URBAIN *follows.* ALL *the ladies, except the* DUCHESS, *drop on their knees. The men bend the knee, the* BISHOP, *a venerable, white-haired figure, blesses them*]

DUCHESS. I am kneeling in the spirit, my lord.

BISHOP. That is the true posture, my daughter.

LOUIS [*Leading the* BISHOP *to a seat*] I trust your Grace has not been inconvenienced.

BISHOP. Save for lack of fresh air, my son. Oh! and there is a spider in my room! As large—as large as that! I am greatly alarmed.

LOUIS [*Smiling*] The monster shall be removed.

BISHOP. No, no! He has taken so much trouble: spun such a beautiful web.

LOUISE. But he alarms you!

BISHOP. Terribly! Oh! Terribly! I shudder even now.

DUCHESS. Louis, the pleasant young man is waiting.

LOUIS. To be sure. [*To* GAUTIER] Your message, sir? I cannot imagine what the Mayor can have to convey, beyond good wishes for the New Year.

GAUTIER. The New Year enters into the message: but with a warning.

LOUIS [*Haughtily*] A warning?

GAUTIER. Yes; for first I am to remind you that in welcoming the New Year to-night you are offending against the Republican calendar.

[*Exclamations and laughter*]

LOUIS. You must forgive our laughter, sir.

GAUTIER. I join in it; but there is the fact.

JACQUELINE [*Languidly*] What *is* this Republican Calendar?

LOUIS. Dear Lady, as far as my knowledge goes—Monsieur Lalance will put me right—they make the sun a liar; mock themselves of the moon; give ten days to each week; and get drunk on the days left over. [*To* GAUTIER] Is that correct, sir?

GAUTIER [*Laughing*] I cannot improve on the description.

LOUIS. And is that all your message?

GAUTIER. It is only the beginning. As you have made no secret of your arrangements——

LOUIS. I make no secret of anything. I keep New Year's Eve as my ancestors kept it, as far back as memory reaches. I entertain my friends to supper. The circle has, alas, grown very narrow.

GAUTIER. But—the Mass?

LOUIS. Ah, yes. To-night there *is* an innovation. As we were deprived of Mass on Christmas Eve, owing——

BISHOP. It was physically impossible, my son; I was locked up in a garret. Ah! the horrible place!

LOUIS. Therefore, my lord is to celebrate it presently; at midnight.

URSULA. Thank God!

GAUTIER. That is the point. You, my Lord Duke, your household, and your friends, are living in Carcassonne on sufferance. To be sure, you have no enemies here, and from the Mayor downwards every inhabitant is ready to protect you. [*Very earnestly*] But harbouring a recalcitrant Bishop, who has refused to take the Republican oath, is in itself a deadly breach of the conditions under which the Convention leaves you unmolested.

[LOUIS *tries to speak; but* GAUTIER *goes on firmly*]

Therefore the Mayor bids me say, the Mass will place all who attend it in jeopardy of their lives—and especially my Lord Bishop, whom all the city loves. In short, he entreats you to forego the Mass; to find another hiding-place for the Bishop; and to dismiss your guests.

LOUIS. The Mayor has the audacity——!

GAUTIER [*Gravely*] There is a special reason, my lord!

LOUIS. That cannot affect us. You have not frequented this house as much as I could wish, sir, or

you would know that here the unhappy events which have overwhelmed my country are not acknowledged. For me, sir, and I think I can say, for my friends, the Revolution has not happened, and the Republic does not exist. [*At a movement from* GAUTIER] It does not exist! The Mayor should not have sent such a message to a Marshal of France. We have always been ready to lay down our lives for our Faith, our Country, and our King. We are equally ready now. That is why we shall hear Mass together, and pray for the dead and the living—and for our enemies. And when Mass is over, we shall sup together, and drink to the memory of our martyred Princes, and to the health of our Sovereign Lord, the unhappy child now in the hands of miscreants. Ah, sir, they have assassinated my royal master; can they kill the King? They have dethroned God; but God is alive! Monsieur Robespierre may drag me to the guillotine; but when my head falls, my lips will be shaping my faith in God, my loyalty to my king, and my love of France. [*To his friends*] Have I spoken your thoughts?

LOUISE [*Throwing herself in his arms*] Dear Father!

DUCHESS [*Taking snuff to hide her emotion*] And with that, young man, you can tell your Mayor to go to the devil.

LOUIS [*Laughing*] No, no! He means well.

GAUTIER [*Gravely*] He means very well; and, as I said, to-night this message has a special point.

BÉASSAC. What, then?

GAUTIER [*Very gravely*] Gaspard Chépy is in Carcassonne.

[All *are profoundly impressed. They glance at* Louis *and at each other, and their lips repeat the name*]

Louis [*As deeply impressed as the others*] Gaspard Chépy. [*To his friends*] You know his story? His implacable hatred for my house?

[All *signify "Yes"*]

And the mischief he has already done me?

[*Same movement*]

[*After reflection*] That makes no difference to me. But for you—— My dear friends, I have no right to——

Béassac [*Interrupting him*] Stop, Louis! Do not say what you were going to: we have not deserved it. [*Gaily*] Your Monsieur Béchamel has achieved a masterpiece: I smelt it. Robespierre himself shall not deprive me of it.

Duchess. The Chépy creature cannot take away the eighty years I've lived.

Ursula. Our prayers will be the more fervent.

Josselin [*To* Jacqueline] This will relieve the tedium, Countess.

Jacqueline. A welcome diversion. [*Then, anxiously*] Is there danger?

Josselin [*Aside, to her*] In my arms?

Louis [*To the* Bishop] My lord—the wolves have scented you——

Bishop [*Very simply*] It is time I robed. Will Urbain assist me?

LOUIS [*With great joy*] Ah!—I thank you. I thank you all.

[*Accompanied by* URBAIN, *the* BISHOP *goes into the oratory, the door of which* LOUIS *ceremoniously opens for him*]

GAUTIER [*To* LOUISE, *indicating the* BISHOP] He is afraid of a spider, but fears nothing else! And all of them! They are wonderful! Wonderful! They have no fear at all.

LOUISE. Should you be afraid, if you were they?

GAUTIER. But these delicate women——! You ——!

LOUISE. Should you love me if I were afraid?

LOUIS [*Closes the door and comes to* GAUTIER] Do I know your intentions as to the Mass, sir?

GAUTIER [*Smiling*] Do you not, my lord?

LOUIS. I am ashamed to have questioned you. [*To the company*] Presently His Grace will summon us to Mass. Let us prepare for that. In the last solemn moments of the old year let us tell each other the dearest wish of our hearts.

GAUTIER [*Eagerly, to* LOUISE] The dearest wish! That must be the way, then!

LOUISE [*Frightened*] You dare not!

GAUTIER. I see it is time I showed *my* courage.

LOUIS [*Continuing*] And when we kneel in the presence of God we will fervently pray for each other, that our wishes may be fulfilled.

[*At his invitation they all sit round the fire*]

Come, now! We are an intimate circle. Open your hearts.

URSULA. Show us the way.

LOUIS. Oh! for myself, I wish the young King may soon come to his throne.

BÉASSAC [*Rising*] Long live the King!

LOUIS. Ah, old war-horse, how often did we utter that cry at Rosbach and Prague, and wherever we fought together for the glory of the Fleur-de-lys! What can you and I wish but that our friendship may last till death, and begin again in the beyond?

[*They embrace.* LOUIS *moves about among his guests, addressing each in turn*]

Duchess, I wish all the world knew the goodness of your heart, as your friends know it. [*To* JOSSELIN *and* JACQUELINE, *who at this moment are furtively pressing each other's hands; with a smile*] It were idle to wish you more than you have; for, having each other, you have all. Canoness, you have been a mother to my child ever since her mother was taken from us. I thank you; and I thank God for you. You know how sincerely; for, better than any one, you know my love for LOUISE. [*He is now at his daughter's side*] Of that I dare scarcely speak. [*With a wistful smile*] At first, for a moment, perhaps I wished it had been possible to christen her Louis. I have long seen my error. [*Sadly*] The House of Olonzac has lived. Its chapter in the history of France is closed. God only knows what edifice will arise out of the ruin of to-day; but better than that a son of the Olonzacs should die in

exile, or turn his sword against his country, or [*drawing himself up*] derogate, is the thought that the last of my race may be one of the makers of a New France, not less glorious than the old. Whatever your lot, dear child, I wish you the happiness I strove to give [*looking at the portrait above the fireplace*] your sainted mother.

LOUISE. Father!

[*Embrace. Emotional pause*]

DUCHESS. I am past wishes. I have only regrets.

URSULA. If you truly repent, even you may hope for mercy.

DUCHESS. My good soul, I didn't say I repented. A child doesn't repent of having eaten a stolen apple. It regrets it hasn't the apple to eat.

BÉASSAC. I wish—— Oh, Lord! How I wish I could have all the chances I've missed.

DUCHESS. Chances of mischief?

BÉASSAC. No. I don't think I missed any of those.

LOUIS [*To* JOSSELIN] Count——?

JOSSELIN. Oh—perhaps it is a mistake to wish. The fulfilment is so disappointing.

JACQUELINE [*Languidly*] Really, Count, on this one point I am almost inclined to agree with you.

URSULA. I am removed from mundane wishes. I pray for you all.

LOUIS. Louise——?

LOUISE [*Timidly, gazing at* GAUTIER] Indeed, sir, I have a wish deep in my heart; but it must remain unspoken.

LOUIS. Last year it was for a new doll. Is it as serious now? You shall tell me alone. Monsieur Lalance, we must not pry into your thoughts; yet——

GAUTIER [*Gravely*] I have a wish, as deep and earnest as that of Mademoiselle Louise. [*Movement of surprised attention*] And I think its fulfilment would fulfil hers.

BÉASSAC [*To the* DUCHESS] What's *this?*

GAUTIER. Bear with me. [*To* LOUIS, *who is looking at him with indignant amazement*] I begged for a private conversation, and it is only dire necessity that drives me to this desperate course.

LOUIS [*Rises*] I think you had best wait till to-morrow, sir.

GAUTIER. Too late, my lord!

LOUIS [*Haughtily*] If I desire you to!

GAUTIER. Too late! For all your friends have guessed my meaning. My wish—my prayer—is that I may be permitted to pay my addresses to Mademoiselle Louise.

[*A pause*]

LOUIS [*To* LOUISE, *sternly*] Your words just now, Mademoiselle: did they mean that you expected this?

LOUISE. I dreaded it.

LOUIS [*With joy*] Ah! dreaded?

LOUISE. And hoped for it.

DUCHESS. And there you are!

LOUIS [*After mastering himself; very gently, to* GAUTIER] It were better this had not happened;

but it would be unkind to delay the point of my answer. It is a clear and definite No.

[LOUISE *utters a little cry*]

LOUIS [*To her*] Do not be more cruel to me than I am to you. [*To* GAUTIER] I learn with pain that an understanding already existed between Mademoiselle Louise and yourself.

[GAUTIER *tries to speak*]

I will not exaggerate the importance of that. But had you followed the usual course, and come to me first, I could have convinced you of the impossibility of the alliance you propose to honour me with, and you would have passed out of my daughter's life. In ordinary times——

[GAUTIER *makes a gesture of hope*]

No, sir, I should not have consented, but I should have brought forward quite other reasons for refusing. Now there is one sufficient reason: you are a republican.

GAUTIER. I am a son of the people.

LOUIS [*Ironically*] I accept the correction. The sons of the people are at this moment at war with—dare I call them?—the sons of tradition.

GAUTIER [*Hotly*] I trust you do not confound me with the fanatics——!

LOUIS. The shading is apt to run. Were I to give my consent to this union between the last de-

scendant of the Olonzacs, and—I use your own words—a son of the people, who is not even a soldier——

GAUTIER. I can become a soldier to-morrow.

LOUIS [*Scornfully*] Of the Republic.

GAUTIER [*Simply*] Of France.

LOUIS [*With a shrug*] Such a consent would be an act of treason against my order; I should seem to be saving my head by the sacrifice of my child; and to be tossing her to the wolves who are baying at my heels.

GAUTIER. Is Mademoiselle Louise not to be consulted?

LOUIS. Before an audience?

LOUISE. I am not afraid of our friends, sir.

LOUIS [*Astonished*] Mademoiselle!

DUCHESS. Your own spirit, Louis!

LOUISE. I have a deep——

LOUIS. Silence, Mademoiselle!

DUCHESS. No, no! Let her speak for herself.

LOUISE. I have a deep affection for Monsieur Lalance. [*Movement*] I believe him to be upright and sincere. I shall be very unhappy if we are parted. [*To* LOUIS] Yet nothing you decide can affect my love for you; and I hope I shall have the courage to do your bidding.

LOUIS [*After a short pause*] I think, sir, the incident is closed.

GAUTIER [*To the company*] I appeal to you all. Chépy is in Carcassonne. You know the horrors of the Paris prisons. You have heard of the worse horrors. I love Mademoiselle, and I must save her. But I can only save her if she be my wife.

[*During this speech all the listeners have perceptibly stiffened*]

BÉASSAC. That, young man, is the wrong argument. Mademoiselle Louise herself will not accept that.

JOSSELIN. The fact that we stay here to-night shows you the value of it.

GAUTIER. Duchess, you have seemed to be on my side——!

DUCHESS. I? Good heavens! I think you are absolutely in the wrong!

LOUIS. Ah!

DUCHESS. I think you should have acted as the Duke or Béassac would have acted.

LOUIS [*To* GAUTIER] You hear? [*To the* DUCHESS] Tell him how we should have acted.

DUCHESS. You would have talked to the father after you had run away with the girl.

LOUIS [*With disgust*] Ah! [*To* LALANCE] I have given you my answer: I can give you no other. My daughter cannot shelter her life, if it be in danger, behind your name; and there is no more to be said.

GAUTIER. Mademoiselle——!

LOUIS. Tell him yourself, Louise.

LOUISE [*With a great effort*] I can only say—I can only say—Courage—and Hope——!

[*Enter* URBAIN, *from the oratory*]

LOUIS. Well?

URBAIN. It is close upon midnight, my lord; His Grace is robed.

LOUIS. Summon the household.

[URBAIN *beckons L. Presently the servants enter and draw up in a file at the back.* TOINON *brings a veil for* LOUISE]

LOUIS [*Gravely*] I am sorry our thoughts have been disturbed——

GAUTIER. My lord——

LOUIS [*Sternly*] Enough, sir. Under the circumstances I cannot hope to detain you.

LOUISE. Oh!

GAUTIER [*After a pause of irresolution; to* LOUISE] Mademoiselle, I repeat your words—Courage—and Hope. [*He salutes the company*] Ladies—my lords——

[*They acknowledge his salute. He goes out L., accompanied by one of the footmen, who presently returns*]

DUCHESS [*As he passes her*] Never say die!

URBAIN [*To* LOUIS] The household is assembled, my lord.

LOUIS. Let them go to their places.

[*Footmen open one wing of the folding doors into the oratory. The servants go in.* TOINON *puts the veil over* LOUISE'S *head. The* DUCHESS *and* JACQUELINE *have brought similar veils, which they now put on. The female servants all have some head-covering.* TOINON *goes into the oratory*]

LOUIS [*To* URBAIN] I do not see Renaud.

URBAIN [*In an undertone*] He is missing, my Lord.

LOUIS. Missing?

URBAIN. My lord, I fear——

LOUIS. Silence! [*To* JOSSELIN, *indicating the oratory*] Count?

JOSSELIN [*Quietly, to* JACQUELINE, *as he leads her*] Pray for—our boy.

JACQUELINE. Must it be a boy?

JOSSELIN. Yes! For France!

[*They go in*]

BÉASSAC [*To the* DUCHESS, *who is leaning on his arm*] Now we are to speak ill of ourselves.

DUCHESS. How else *could* you speak of yourself?

BÉASSAC. I paint myself blacker than I am, so that the recording angel may not believe one-half I say.

DUCHESS. The other half will fill his volume.

[*As she and* BÉASSAC *reach the door, the footmen throw open both wings with great ceremony. The* DUCHESS *and* BÉASSAC *pass in.* LOUISE *is standing lost in thought*]

URSULA [*Gently*] Louise!

[LOUISE *comes out of her dream. She takes* URSULA'S *outstretched hand and they pass on.* LOUIS *is watching* LOUISE *anxiously. As she reaches the door she turns to him*]

LOUISE [*Impulsively*] Father!
LOUIS. Yes, my child?
LOUISE. Let me kneel with you?
LOUIS [*With joy*] Ah! Brave child!

[URSULA *passes in alone. The* DUKE *and* LOUISE *follow. The two footmen go in and close the doors from within*]

[*A clock strikes twelve. At once the opening sentences of the Mass are heard in an indistinct murmur*]

[*Enter* RENAUD, *R.*]

RENAUD [*Over his shoulder*] Quietly, and quickly, Citizen Chépy.

[*Enter* CHÉPY, *followed by six National Guards with fixed bayonets*]

CHÉPY [*Quietly*] Where are they?
RENAUD [*Pointing to the oratory*] There—— At Mass. Listen.
CHÉPY. Put out the lights.

[*Two of the guards do so*]

Is there any other way out?
RENAUD. No. It's a trap. [*Going towards the oratory*] Shall I open it?
CHÉPY. Why hurry? Let them stew! Let them stew!

CURTAIN

ACT II

The Prison of the rue de Sèvres, Paris. In the centre at the back four steps lead up to the door admitting to the cells. Towards the right, but high up, is a long window showing the thickness of the walls. The panes are covered with dust and cobwebs. The window is heavily barred. On the right is a platform of rough boards on trestles, two feet off the ground. On this are two wooden forms to hold twelve men. In front of the forms is a high-backed chair and one other chair, behind a plain deal table on which are writing materials. Below the platform is a wooden stool and a small deal table. The wall behind the table is decorated with the insignia of the Republic and the motto "LIBERTÉ, EGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ, OU LA MORT!" *At the back, between the platform and the door to the cells, is a barrel of wine on a trestle. At its side, on a stool, are tin cups. On the floor of the room are six straw-bottomed chairs. On the left, at a projecting angle, are the heavy and solid gates of the prison, with an enormous lock, and great, rusty bolts and chains. These gates open inwards and disclose the rue de Sèvres running at right angles to the room, and visible for a considerable distance. The walls of the room are yellow-washed, but the plaster has peeled off in various places, showing the stonework under it. They are decorated with a number of*

proclamations and announcements; some headed with fasces and caps of Liberty; some with a crowing cock; some with a pleasing representation of the guillotine. They are further decorated with chalk caricatures, and with mottos and names. The room is lighted by tallow candles, or oil lamps, fixed on an iron hoop hanging from the ceiling. The appearance of the room is sordid, yet terrifying. It is night. The gates are closed. Shouts of a mob are heard outside. LEBRUN, *the Gaoler, is arranging the platform. A roll of drums and heavy knocking at the gate, as with the hilt of a sword.* LEBRUN *laboriously opens the gates.* GAUTIER LALANCE, *now Lieutenant,* CORPORAL DUROZ, JACQUES *and nine other men of the National Guard are seen. Behind them a mob. There is a bonfire in the street, at the back.* GAUTIER *comes into the room.*

GAUTIER. Corporal Duroz, detach one of your men.

DUROZ. Number One. Six paces forward. March!

[JACQUES *comes forward and stands at attention*]

GAUTIER [*Recognising him*] Ah? Jacques?—you will stand at the guillotine and bring word as they are ready. March.

[JACQUES *salutes and marches off, turning sharply to the right outside the gate.* GAUTIER *continues, to* DUROZ]

Corporal Duroz and three, five and seven, outside the gate. [*He points to the steps*] Two, four, at the steps. Six, eight at the platform. Nine, ten, inside the gate. March!

[THE MEN *take up the positions indicated*]

GAUTIER [*Explaining himself to* LEBRUN] Lalance—Lieutenant.

LEBRUN. Does this mean the Commission is coming, Lieutenant?

GAUTIER. Immediately.

LEBRUN. At last. [*Alluding to the* MOB] The citizens are losing patience.

GAUTIER. What do they hope to see?

LEBRUN. There's such a crowd round the guillotine they can't get near it. So the next best thing is to watch the prisoners start.

GAUTIER. Ghouls. [*Calling*] Corporal Duroz!

[LEBRUN *busies himself on the platform*]

DUROZ [*Advancing and saluting*] Here, my lieutenant.

GAUTIER [*In an undertone, but sharply*] Understood?

DUROZ. You risk your head.

GAUTIER. Remember the girl's name?

DUROZ. Louise Olonzac.

GAUTIER. Watch.

[*Meanwhile* BONAMI *and eleven rough men have come to the gate*]

DUROZ [*To them*] Halt!

BONAMI [*Showing a paper*] Jury.

DUROZ. The word?

BONAMI [*Perfunctorily*] Liberty, Equality, Fraternity——

DUROZ. Or Death. Pass, Jury.

[THE JURY *enter*]

BONAMI [*As he passes* GAUTIER *he spits on the floor*] Pah! Hirelings!

LEBRUN [*Obsequiously*] Welcome, citizens. [*Points to the platform*] Those are your seats. [*Points to the barrel*] Take a drink. The Republic is generous.

[THE JURY *crowd round the barrel; drink; light their pipes; then sprawl on the benches on the platform*]

GAUTIER [*To* LEBRUN] Prisoners safe?

LEBRUN. Ho!

GAUTIER. And—well?

LEBRUN. No. They're all suffering from a mortal complaint. [*He draws his hand across the back of his neck*] Coo-ick!

GAUTIER. Ha! Very facetious.

LEBRUN [*Modestly*] One does what one can.

GAUTIER. Mademoi—— [*He catches himself up*] The citizens Olonzac?

LEBRUN. Both in excellent health. [*Suspiciously*] Why are you so interested?

GAUTIER [*Indifferently*] Oh, they come from my parts.

LEBRUN. Dam' fine gel.

GAUTIER. Is her maid with her?

LEBRUN. Toinon Chépy? Yes. Not a prisoner, though; being as they say, the Commissioner's daughter. She's taken a room [*Points up stage*] just up the street.

GAUTIER. *I* know where her room is.

LEBRUN. Oho! Dog! Now I see why you're so interested. Another dam' fine gel. Congratulate you, Lieutenant. Presently you'll be able to see her home.

GAUTIER. I hope so.

DUROZ [*To the* SOLDIERS *outside*] 'Tion! Present Arrrms!

LEBRUN. The Commissioner!

GAUTIER [*To the men inside, perfunctorily*] Present arrrms! [*To himself*] Curse him!

[*Enter* CHÉPY, *accompanied by* DUFOUR, *and followed by* RENAUD]

LEBRUN. Citizen Representative, all's ready.

CHÉPY. Shut the gate.

[LEBRUN *does so. The* MOB *howls*]

CHÉPY [*To* GAUTIER] Citizen Lieutenant, you need more men to keep that mob in order.

GAUTIER [*Laughing*] Mob? That is the Sovereign Majesty of the People.

CHÉPY [*Looking at him sharply*] Eh? Citizen Gautier Lalance, I think?

GAUTIER. The same.

CHÉPY. Ah! Citizen Renaud has told me about you.

GAUTIER. Citizen Renaud is a liar.

RENAUD. Repeat those words, citizen!

GAUTIER [*Coldly*] Citizen Renaud is a liar.

RENAUD [*To* LEBRUN] He has the audacity to repeat them!

CHÉPY [*To* GAUTIER] I shall report you to your commanding officer.

GAUTIER. When you like. Shall I remove the guard?

[*The* MOB *outside howls*]

CHÉPY [*With a shudder*] Stay where you are. You'll lose nothing by waiting. [*He goes towards the platform*] To work.

RENAUD [*As he passes* GAUTIER] Aristocrat.

GAUTIER. Liar.

CHÉPY [*Facing the* JURY] Citizens, we have a heavy evening's work before us. [*The* JURY *settle down*] The Committee of Public Safety has long wanted to be rid of the vermin we are to exterminate to-night; but I asked, as a special privilege, to be their judge. [*Grimly*] They are very particular friends of mine. [JURY *laugh*] So, for seven months they have enjoyed the hospitality of the Republic. [*Laugh*] During that time, as you know, I have been busy in the South. [*Ah!*] The name of Chépy has been in many mouths down there; and in most it was the last word they uttered. [*Laugh*] To-night we must make short work of it. [*Ah!*] The outlook is black, citizens. Citizen Robespierre, [*Approval*] that pure-minded

patriot, [*Cheers*] is being violently attacked by renegades and traitors. [*Anger*] Since the sixteenth Germinal, when in his just resentment he put Danton to death [*Approval*] the filthy reactionaries of the Convention have been yelling at his heels. [*Anger*] To-day, the ninth Thermidor, they are powerful, and there is no knowing what betrayal they are plotting. [*Rage*] Strengthen his hands, then, by showing your strength. [*Ah!*] Remember! we are not here to show mercy; we are here to punish. [*Joy. With emphasis*] If we allow any of the vile brood of aristocrats to live, let it only be because life will be more bitter for them than death. [*Good! Good!*]

[*He gets to his seat*] Citizen gaoler, summon the prisoners.

[DUFOUR *sits on his left. A* JURYMAN *hands* CHÉPY *a cup of wine, which he drinks*]

[LEBRUN *unlocks the cell door and goes out*]

RENAUD [*From his seat below the platform; to* CHÉPY] What of us, if Robespierre falls?

CHÉPY [*Stooping to him, with a grin*] Look in the glass, and say good-bye to your head.

RENAUD. Horrible!

CHÉPY. If we outlast to-night, I shall have done all I wanted to.

[RENAUD *rises*]

What's the matter?

RENAUD [*Trying to get away*] I've just remembered——

CHÉPY. Sit down!

RENAUD. It's a matter of——
CHÉPY [*Thunders*] Sit down!

[LEBRUN *re-enters*]

LEBRUN. The prisoners.

[*The* JURY *utter various exclamations expressing interest, and crane forward.* GAUTIER *gets into the extreme left corner*]

[*Enter, down the steps,* BÉASSAC *and* URSULA; JOSSELIN *and* JACQUELINE; *the* BISHOP, *supporting the* DUCHESS; LOUIS, *supporting* LOUISE, *and, lastly,* TOINON. *At the sight of* LOUISE, GAUTIER *starts forward, but checks himself.* LEBRUN *directs the prisoners to the chairs, but as there are not enough* LOUIS *and* JOSSELIN *remain standing. Meanwhile* GAUTIER *draws the attention of* TOINON]

GAUTIER [*Quietly, but eagerly*] Toinon!
TOINON [*Recognising him*] You! [*She shrinks from him; he catches her wrist*]
GAUTIER. Silence! [*Rapidly*] Go to your house. Keep the door ajar. Stand close within it.
TOINON. What do you mean?
GAUTIER. You heard. [*With great emphasis*] Keep your door ajar; stand behind it, ready to shut it.
TOINON [*After a look*] Saints in heaven——!
GAUTIER. And to Louise say: Courage and Hope!

[*He motions her to silence and retires into his corner*]

CHÉPY [*Seeing* TOINON *moving about*] Who is that?

TOINON [*Boldly*] Toinon, father.

CHÉPY. Is your name on the list? [*He examines a list*]

TOINON. How should I know?

RENAUD. We can easily put it on.

TOINON. Thanks.

CHÉPY. It is not here. Be off. [*To* LEBRUN] Open the gate.

TOINON [*She asks* GAUTIER *in dumbshow*] "Shall I go?"

GAUTIER [*Similarly*] "Go, quickly."

[LEBRUN *has opened one wing of the gate. The* MOB *is pressing in. A terrible old woman has brought her knitting, and is sitting on a stone at the gate. The* MOB *yells with fury*]

LEBRUN [*To* CHÉPY] They'll kill her.

CHÉPY. That's her look-out. [*To* TOINON] Go!

LOUISE [*Frightened by the mob*] You cannot go, Toinon!

TOINON [*Laughing*] Here is my passport.

[*She whips the tricolor cockade out of* RENAUD'S *hat, and sticks it in her hair; to* RENAUD]

Thank you!

[*The* Jury *laugh applaudingly. She comes to* Louis]

My lord, may I kiss your hand?

[*She does so. She bows to* Ursula. Louise *embraces and kisses her.* Toinon *whispers*]

"Courage! and Hope!"

[*Then she turns to* Lebrun, *who is still at the gate*]

Fling open both wings!

[Lebrun *opens the other wing. The* Mob *is with difficulty kept back by the guard.* Toinon *points to the cockade. The* Mob's *fury turns to laughter and applause. With her hands on her hips* Toinon *swaggers out, turning sharply to her left outside the gates, so that she is seen going up the street with some of the* Mob *dancing wildly round her.* Duroz *has watched her all the time, and has expressed unbounded admiration.* Lebrun *closes the gates with a crash*]

Chépy [*To* Renaud] Citizen scrivener, read the names. [*To the prisoners*] Answer as you are called.

Renaud. Felicien Gibert, sometime Bishop of Carcassonne.

BISHOP [*Rising*] I am Bishop of Carcassonne, my friends.

CHÉPY. You are not. You rejected the constitutional oath.

BISHOP [*With mild surprise*] Of course.

CHÉPY. And with that you ceased to be a Bishop. Moreover, your superstitious mummeries have been replaced by the pure worship of reason. In spite of this, and of many warnings, you dared to celebrate what you call Mass on several occasions, but specifically on the night between the eleventh and twelfth Nivose of this year. What have you to say?

BISHOP [*Very gently*] My good friends, I am Bishop of Carcassonne. My mandate was not from the Convention, and the Convention could not remove it; for it was from God. He alone can judge whether I have been a faithful steward. As for Holy Mass, of course I celebrated it whenever and wherever I found an opportunity amid our persecution. What else could I do?

CHÉPY [*To the* JURY] He confesses. I need scarcely put the question.

BONAMI. Guilty.

CHÉPY. Death. Stand aside.

[*The other prisoners express horror and pity*]

BISHOP. One moment. May I speak?

CHÉPY. No use. We've no time to waste.

BISHOP [*With a gentle smile*] You have more time than I. [*To the* JURY] My children, I pray that God may forgive you as fully and freely as I

forgive you; for the sake of His Son, our Saviour.

ALL THE PRISONERS [*Except the* DUCHESS, *who shakes her head violently*] Amen.

CHÉPY. Thank you for nothing. [*To* RENAUD] Next.

RENAUD. Baudouin Batioz, sometime Marquis of Béassac.

[BÉASSAC *is yawning, apparently bored beyond bearing*]

CHÉPY. Citizen Batioz, are you deaf?

BÉASSAC [*Rising languidly*] Oh, here.

CHÉPY. Stand forward.

BÉASSAC. Thank you. This is near enough.

CHÉPY. You are afraid to look your judges in the face.

BÉASSAC. I am.

CHÉPY. Ah!

BÉASSAC. It's longer since they washed than since they ate garlic.

[*Uproar*]

DUFOUR. Silence!

CHÉPY [*To the* JURY] Master your indignation. Feast your eyes on this mountain of iniquity. This is the sort of creature who used to trample on our prostrate bodies and forbid us to call our souls our own. What has his life been, but filthy self-indulgence and one long debauch? What——

BÉASSAC [*Holding up a weary hand*] Judge—citizen—or whatever you call yourself, do your dirty work, but spare me your pot-house eloquence.

CHÉPY. And now he insults the Majesty of the Court! The charge against him is——

BONAMI. No charge is needed!

[*Approbation from the* JURY]

CHÉPY. Your verdict?

JURY [Shout] Guilty!—Death!—Guilty!

BÉASSAC [*Yawning*] Highly interesting. Guilty of what?

CHÉPY. Guilty of existing.

[JURY *delighted*]

The sentence is death. Stand aside.

BÉASSAC. I am glad to put an end to our acquaintance.

CHÉPY. Next.

RENAUD. Ursula Beauchastel.

[URSULA *steps forward. She is very calm and placid*]

CHÉPY. You assisted at the Mass. Have you anything to say?

URSULA. I am praying for you.

CHÉPY. Is that all?

[URSULA *is silent*]

CHÉPY [*To the* JURY] Well?

[THE JURY *hesitate*]

CHÉPY [*Angrily*] Well?
BONAMI [*A little abashed*] Guilty—but——
CHÉPY [*Cutting him short*] Death.
URSULA. I pity you profoundly.
CHÉPY. Next.
RENAUD. Josselin Bonassac, sometime Count of Avantignan. [*A slight pause*] And his wife.

[JOSSELIN *and* JACQUELINE *step forward*]

JOSSELIN. One word, Monsieur Chépy.

[*Threatening murmurs from the* JURY]

CHÉPY. There is no Monsieur. I am citizen Chépy.
JOSSELIN [*Calmly*] One word, Monsieur.

[JURY *angry*]

We will save time and trouble. The Countess and I were present at the Mass on New Year's morning. We should be present again, could we hope for the privilege. [*He takes* JACQUELINE's *hand*] And here, in your faces, we cry, "God save the King!"

[*Emotion of the* PRISONERS; *rage of the* JURY]

CRIES. Away with them! To the guillotine! Death!
DUFOUR. Silence!
JOSSELIN [*Defiantly*] We are ready to die together.

CHÉPY [*Drily, with deadly cruelty*] Exactly; but that is a pleasure we shall not afford you.

[JURY *attentive*]

JOSSELIN. Have I not spoken strongly enough? I repeat——

CHÉPY. I understand quite clearly. [*To the* JURY] Citizens, this is one of the cases I foreshadowed. These two are romantically anxious to die together. But we are not here to oblige them. [*Ah!*] In going to Mass the woman obviously acted under her husband's influence. Just now she did not join in his blasphemous speech. [*Ironically*] We must temper justice with mercy. You will therefore conclude she is not guilty. [*Laughing assent.* JACQUELINE *clutches* JOSSELIN'S *hand*] The man, on the other hand——

JURY [*Shout*] Guilty!

CHÉPY. And condemned to death.

JOSSELIN [*Drawing himself up haughtily; but in agony*] I thank you.

JACQUELINE [*Distraught*] I will not have it! I am as guilty as he!

JOSSELIN [*To her; sternly*] Jacqueline!

JACQUELINE [*Mastering herself*] Yes—yes—forgive.

CHÉPY. Next.

RENAUD. The woman Autevielle.

DUCHESS [*Seated*] I do believe the creature means me!

RENAUD. Stand up.

[*She does not stir*]

Did you hear me?

DUCHESS. I heard you, vermin.

CHÉPY. Obey.

DUCHESS. My good fellow, I have lived nearly eighty-two years, and I've never consciously obeyed a living soul. *Do* you think I'm going to begin with you?

CHÉPY [*To* RENAUD] Write that the woman Autevielle was allowed to sit, owing to her infirmities.

DUCHESS [*As nearly as possible leaping to her feet*] Miscreant!

CHÉPY [*With a grin*] Ah! [*To the* JURY] This is one of the worst cases. According to her own showing this miserable woman has dragged out a shameless existence through three generations.

DUCHESS [*Advancing; her blood is thoroughly up*] You, Chépy, or whatever your vile name is, listen to me!

CHÉPY [*Taken aback*] How dare you?

DUCHESS. Dare! I am an old woman, and I have no weapon but my tongue; but that has put to flight far other assailants than you and your evil-smelling myrmidons.

CHÉPY [*Furious*] Do you know you have only a quarter of an hour to live?

DUCHESS. Fool! Have I lived eighty odd years to haggle with you for one more quarter of an hour in the France you have turned into shambles?

[*Roar of laughter; she strikes* CHÉPY'S *table with her stick*]

Silence, riff-raff! [*To* Chépy] You sit here in judgment on your betters. [*To* Renaud] And you, with your dirty hands, enter the sentences in your greasy book. [*She seems inspired*] Your names are written in another book and against them is the mark of Cain. Your turn is coming! Your turn is coming! Death is grinning across your shoulder! His bony fingers are closing round your throat! Send *me* to my death, and you send me to my God and my King! But you! Even the devil will spew you up again.

Chépy [*After a moment's stupor; to the* Jury] Your verdict on this harridan?

Bonami [*Almost with terror*] Guilty.

Chépy [*To the* Duchess] And so, to your eloquence I answer one word: Death.

Duchess. If hell is kind enough to keep you, pray to me for a drop of water, and hear my answer. [*With great dignity*] Lead me to my chair. [*One of the Guards steps forward*] Not you: scum. My Lord Duke of Chastelfranc!

[Louis *gives her his arm to lean on and leads her to her chair*]

Chépy [*Livid with suppressed rage*] Ah, yes! My Lord Duke of Chastelfranc! I am in a proper humour for my Lord Duke. [*To* Renaud] Call him.

Renaud [*Nervously*] My Lord Duke of——

Chépy [*Furious*] What's that?

Renaud. I—I beg pardon!—You, yourself——! Citizen—Citizen Olonzac.

LOUIS. Do you mean me, friend Renaud?

CHÉPY. He means the man Olonzac; sometime Duke of Chastelfranc.

LOUIS [*Simply*] I am Louis of Olonzac, of Gaillac, Duke of Chastelfranc; Commander of the most noble order of the Golden Fleece; Commander of the most noble order of Saint Louis; Commander of the most noble order of the Holy Spirit; Marshal of France, and Captain of the Body Guard of His Sacred Majesty, King Louis the Sixteenth, whose soul is in God's keeping.

THE PRISONERS. Amen.

CHÉPY. You are the man Olonzac; and I am the man Chépy.

LOUIS [*With an ironic bow*] We have met before.

CHÉPY. You observe I had not forgotten. [*To the* JURY] There is a heavy act of accusation against this Olonzac; but he has himself favoured us with a string of crimes which forms a stronger indictment. How say you?

BONAMI. Guilty.

CHÉPY [*After a pause*] Olonzac, your brother did me the greatest wrong one man can do another; and there was no remedy; and you laughed. The laugh is on my side now. You have heard the verdict. I say this to you, man Olonzac! the only bitterness in my cup now is that I can pronounce no heavier sentence than death.

LOUISE [*Rushing to her father with a great cry*] Father!

CHÉPY [*His face suddenly lighted up with a fierce joy*] Ah!—Bring the girl forward.

LOUISE [*Clinging in fear to* LOUIS] No, no!

CHÉPY [*To* GAUTIER] Citizen Lieutenant, do your duty.

[GAUTIER *comes forward*—LOUISE *is moaning in her father's arms*]

GAUTIER. Mademoiselle Louise——

[LOUISE *looks up at him; recognises him*]

LOUISE. Gautier! [*With a great joy*] Father! It is Gautier! We are saved!

LOUIS [*Sternly to* GAUTIER] You should have spared her this.

LOUISE [*To* LOUIS] What do you mean?

LOUIS [*Pityingly*] Do you not see his uniform?

CHÉPY. The young woman seems to be under a delusion. Lieutenant Gautier is a soldier of the Republic; and it is he who will stand under the guillotine when the prisoners expiate their crimes.

LOUISE [*Smiling*] That is not true. You are trying to frighten me. Monsieur Lalance is a loyal gentleman. Monsieur Lalance—— [*But she sees the emotion on* GAUTIER's *face, and is filled with fear and a horrible doubt. She shrinks into her father's arms again*] Oh!

LOUIS [*Gravely*] Do not forget you are Louise of Olonzac.

LOUISE. Yes—yes—in a moment. Now. It is over. [*To* CHÉPY] You called me, sir? [*She sways forward*]

CHÉPY [*To the* JURY] Citizens, here is the last of the brood of Olonzac.

DUFOUR [*Leering*] Devilish pretty, too.

CHÉPY. Devilish pretty, as you say. If she be left alive, she will miss no opportunity of continuing the poisonous race. On the other hand her father's day is over, and his fangs are drawn. Were it not better to revise your verdict? Were it not better the father lived to repent of his sins, and the girl paid the penalty her house owes the Nation?

LOUIS. What is the devilish meaning of your words?

CHÉPY [*To the* JURY] Well? What do you say?

JURY [*Shout*] Yes! Yes!

CHÉPY. The man Olonzac is to live?

JURY. Yes!

LOUISE [*With joy*] Ah! you are merciful!

LOUIS [*Restraining her; voiceless*] Louise!

CHÉPY [*Continues*] And his daughter is to die?

JURY. Yes!

LOUIS [*With a great cry*] No! No!

CHÉPY [*With concentrated malignity*] You see; after all, I found a heavier sentence. Olonzac, you are free. If you like, you can watch the executions.

[LOUIS *almost roughly thrusts* LOUISE *away.* URSULA *receives her. Then he faces* CHÉPY. *He speaks with cold calculation*]

LOUIS. Ah? I am free?—Set me free if you dare! [*To the* JURY] This monster who sits here now as my judge was my servant. His cruelty drove his wife into my brother's arms, and he was the laughing-stock of the countryside. Would you like to hear what the peasants called him?

CHÉPY. Silence!

LOUIS. I am insulting you, Monsieur Chépy; and there is only one way of silencing me. [*Pointing to* RENAUD] This other, who records your verdicts, was my valet. He is a spy and a traitor. I am insulting you, Monsieur Renaud. [*He turns to* GAUTIER] As for this brave soldier; how can I insult him?

LOUISE. Father!

LOUIS. He is a coward and a cur. [GAUTIER *stands rigid*] Does that insult him? No. He does not wince. [*To the* JURY] Set me free if you dare! I defy the Republic; I defy the Convention; I defy the Committee of Public Safety; I spurn and defy you all: The King lives! Long live the King!—Set me free if you dare!

[*Uproar*]

CHÉPY. Shall this man be granted the privilege of death?

JURY. No!

CHÉPY. The verdict stands. [RENAUD *hands him the list and he reads*] The man Olonzac and the woman Bonassac are free. The women Autevielle, and Beauchastel, the girl Olonzac, the men Gibert, Batioz and Bonassac are condemned to death, and execution follows immediately upon the verdict. Now. The citizen Lieutenant Lalance is responsible for the safe delivery of the prisoners into the executioner's hands. The Court will adjourn to the place of execution to see that its decrees are duly carried out. The dainty women,

whose delicate feet have never trodden the plebeian cobbles of Paris, need not shudder at the walk before them. We have shown every consideration for their comfort: the guillotine is but a few yards away. [*To the* JURY] Come, citizens. Business is over; now, for pleasure. [*To* LOUIS] Quits at last! [*To the others*] I wish you a delightful quarter of an hour.

[LEBRUN *opens the gates.* CHÉPY, RENAUD, DUFOUR *and the* JURY *go out, laughing and talking; the* SOLDIERS *present arms as before. The* MOB *cheers them wildly. They are seen to turn sharply to their right.* LEBRUN *closes the gates. The* PRISONERS *are in various groups*]

GAUTIER [*In an undertone to his men*] Right about turn!

[*The men turn, so that their faces are to the wall.* GAUTIER *retires into a corner*]

LOUIS [*Mastering himself with a great effort; to* LOUISE] Now! We must help them all. You and I must show what courage means. Ah, you will not take this journey alone. Your mother will meet you; and I shall follow close on your footsteps.

LOUISE [*Pale, cold and hard*] I have no fear, father.

LOUIS. Do not harden your heart. Weep, my child.

LOUISE. I have no tears. I am very glad I am

to die. I hope death is silence and sleep. I hope it is the end.

LOUIS [*To the* BISHOP] Can you comfort the child, my lord?

BISHOP [*To* LOUISE] Shall we pray together, my daughter?

LOUISE [*As above*] No, my lord. I have nothing to pray for.

BISHOP [*Gently*] Pray for *me.* [*He kneels and draws her down to his side.* URSULA *is already on her knees in another part of the room. A pause*]

DUCHESS [*With a sudden outburst*] For God's sake, speak, some one. Are we to sit here like graven images, and let [*indicating the soldiers*] those fellows think we are afraid?—Béassac!

BÉASSAC [*Starting out of a dream*] I am wondering what is the matter with me. I feel as I felt before my first assignation. It is not fear. It is curiosity.

DUCHESS. Yes. I have been asking the riddle eighty years. Now I shall get the answer.

LOUIS [*Who is perilously near madness*] I want to laugh! I want to laugh!

BÉASSAC [*To the* DUCHESS] Do something, or he will go mad.

DUCHESS [*With a nod of understanding*] Why shouldn't we laugh, Louis?

LOUIS [*Feverishly*] Yes! Life is an epigram: with the sting at the end.

DUCHESS [*With a meaning look at Béassac*] For me, the sting is that you won my money last night.

BÉASSAC [*Taking his cue from her*] Win it back! Cards!

DUCHESS [*Taking them out of her reticule*] Here they are. Come, Louis!

LOUIS [*In a sort of delirium*] Why not? What is it to be?

DUCHESS. Ombre, of course! We'll play high. I need a bribe for Saint Peter!

LOUIS. Ha! Good!—Fish! Fish! Where are the fish?

LEBRUN [*Taking brass and silver buttons out of his pocket*] Here are some buttons I've collected.

LOUIS. For which the wearers have no further use, eh? That's droll. That's very droll. Seven for each.

[LEBRUN *has brought the little table at which* RENAUD *sat to the centre, where the* DUCHESS *was already seated. She is now L. of the table*]

DUCHESS. Who deals? [*She deals in the ordinary way, face up, to determine the deal*]

JOSSELIN [*Seated R. front with* JACQUELINE; *to her*] What can I say to comfort you?

JACQUELINE. Say nothing. I shall be brave. [*Whispered*] Dearest, I have good cause to be.

JOSSELIN [*Eagerly*] What cause?

BÉASSAC. My deal! The Ace of Spades: the death card. Appropriate but tactless.

[*The* DUCHESS *shuffles and cuts.* BÉASSAC *deals to the right, in threes, till he has dealt nine to each. He places the remainder on his left*]

JOSSELIN [*To* JACQUELINE] Tell me; tell me. What cause?

JACQUELINE [*Laying her head on his breast*] Oh, my dearest, our prayer has been heard.

JOSSELIN [*Eagerly*] What do you mean?

JACQUELINE. You will not leave me alone.

JOSSELIN. Oh, God be praised! Why did you not tell me sooner?

JACQUELINE. I feared they would let me live. But now it is God's will.

JOSSELIN. Yes! Yes! Oh! I shall go to my death happy.

DUCHESS. I pass.

LOUIS. I play my hand—*sans prendre.*

DUCHESS. Thinks he has five tricks! But I'll teach him.

BÉASSAC. Yes. You shuffled. [*To* LOUIS] Well? Trumps?

LOUIS. Hearts.

DUCHESS. Two cards.

[BÉASSAC *gives her two*]

BÉASSAC. Three. [*He takes three*]

JOSSELIN [*To* JACQUELINE[You shall call him Josselin; and so I shall always be with you.

JACQUELINE. He will be brave and handsome, as you are.

LOUIS [*Playing the Ace of Hearts*] Baste!

BÉASSAC [*Slamming a card down, and shouting*] Manille!

DUCHESS [*Slamming hers down harder; triumphantly*] Spadille!

BISHOP [*Has crossed to* URSULA, *and leads her to* LOUISE] Come to her, my daughter; she needs you.

LOUISE [*Shaken with sobs*] You have done me good! Oh, you have done me good!

URSULA [*Embracing her*] Louise!

[*One wing of the gate is thrust open;* DUROZ *appears.* JACQUES *is at his side*]

DUROZ. The Citizen Batioz.

DUCHESS [*Absorbed in the game*] Silence! Don't interrupt.

DUROZ [*With rough good humour*] Come, come! The Widow is waiting.

BÉASSAC [*Who rose and clutched the table in terror for a moment, now pulls himself together*] It's too bad. I swear, I'll never play again. I had two Matadores. Duchess, accept my apologies. You heard what this excellent officer said. The Widow is waiting. My last assignation: I cannot disappoint a lady. [*He kisses the* DUCHESS's *hand*]

DUCHESS. Say I think her exacting.

[BÉASSAC *grips* LOUIS' *hand in silence. Then he is on the point of crossing to* LOUISE, *but* LOUIS *stops him with a gesture*]

BÉASSAC [*With a gesture of apology*] I nearly forgot my manners. [*To* LEBRUN] Fellow, my hat and cane! [LEBRUN *hands them to him*] Ladies—my lords—— Good-night. [*To* DUROZ] Now, Cupid, lead me to your red Venus!

[*He swaggers out, turning sharply to the right*]

[*The* Mob *gives a frantic yell.* Lebrun *closes the gate.* Louis *is looking straight before him. After a moment's silence*]

Duchess [*With an effort*] We can't play Ombre with a dummy.

Louis [*His mouth twitches; he does not know what he's saying*] Not with a dummy. Not with a dummy. [*He moves restlessly and without purpose, and ends by standing and staring at* Louise]

Duchess. Piquet, though! [*He does not answer*] Piquet, Louis!

Louis. Piquet, of course!—Piquet!—Why is she crying? [*He comes to the seat Béassac vacated*] He sat here; and now he is dead. [*He shrinks in horror to the back of the table*]

Duchess. I'll sit in his seat. 'Twill bring me luck!

[*She sits on the right of the table and shuffles the cards*]

Josselin [*To* Jacqueline] Teach him to love France.

Jacqueline. Don't speak any more. Hold my hand—— Oh, my lover!

Louise [*To* Ursula] Will they let us go together?

Ursula. You will come with as firm a tread as mine.

LOUIS [*Staring straight ahead*] Voices of the dying—voices of the dying——!

DUCHESS. Cut for deal! [LOUIS *mechanically lifts the cards*] My deal! [*She raps the table sharply*] Come! Come! Attention!

LOUIS. Forgive me, Duchess. Now I am all yours.

[*They go through the preliminaries of the game*]

URSULA [*To the* BISHOP, *pointing to* LOUIS *and the* DUCHESS] I do not understand——

BISHOP. Let be. God understands.

DUCHESS [*To* LOUIS] Well? Declare.

LOUIS. Forty-one.

DUCHESS. Not good.

LOUIS. Quatorze aces.

DUCHESS. Good.

[*The gate opens;* DUROZ *and* JACQUES *appear as before*]

DUROZ. Citizen Felicien Gibert.

[*All rise*]

BISHOP. I am ready. [*All except the* DUCHESS *kneel. She remains standing with the cards in her hand*] My children. God strengthen you. God give you good courage. [*To* JOSSELIN *and* LOUIS] Especially those who are left. [*He blesses them. To* DUROZ] Lead on, my son.

[*He goes out. The* Mob *yells. He blesses them. He turns off sharp to the right.* Jacques *whispers to* Duroz]

Duroz [*With forced mirth*] To be sure! They're taking 'em wholesale. [*Calls*] The citizens Beauchastel and Autevielle.

[Louis *crosses rapidly to* Ursula. *The* Duchess *stands rigid; the cards slip one by one out of her nerveless fingers to the floor*]

Ursula [*To* Louis] By the time your agony comes I shall be interceding for you at the Virgin's feet.

Duchess [*Paralysed*] I know no prayers. I know no prayers.

Ursula [*Coming to her*] I will pray for both.

Duchess [*Who has sunk back on her chair*] I am a very feeble old woman.

Ursula. I will support you.

Duroz [*Kindly*] It's only a step. Come along, mother.

Duchess. "Mother!" I am not even a mother.

[Ursula *looks at* Louis *with entreaty*]

Louis [*Quietly*] Duchess! the King awaits you.

Duchess [*Rising; transfigured*] Ah! I shall see His Majesty! I shall see my Queen! I am going to Court! [*To* Duroz] Lead on, Monsieur!

Ursula. Lean on me.

Duchess. Not yet. Not yet. Not until we have

passed through the rabble. But after—I will cling so close to you, and you are so good, that Saint Peter will let me pass notwithstanding my sins.

[*With a deep curtsey* URSULA *indicates that the* DUCHESS *is to precede her.* JACQUELINE *makes a similar curtsey.* LOUISE *is still kneeling*]

DUCHESS [*Facing the gate, of which only one wing is open*] What is this? [*To* DUROZ] Learn, Monsieur, that when the Duchess of Autevielle condescends to go through a door, both wings are opened!

[*At a gesture from* DUROZ, LEBRUN *opens the second wing*]

GAUTIER. Right about turn! Present arms!

[*The* GUARD *obey. The* DUCHESS *precedes* DAME URSULA. LOUIS *and* JOSSELIN *bow low as they pass. The* MOB *greets them with a howl of execration.* URSULA *takes no notice. She is telling her beads. The* DUCHESS, *however, makes a gesture of contempt and defiance. They turn to the right. The gates are closed.* GAUTIER *whispers to* LEBRUN, *and he comes to* LOUIS]

LEBRUN [*To* LOUIS; *kindly*] The worst is to come. Take my advice. You are free, but you cannot leave the prison; the mob would slay you. But

go to your cell [*glancing at* LOUISE] without farewells.

LOUIS [*Coming out of his stupor*] Are you speaking to me, my friend?

LEBRUN. Go to your cell. Don't wait here.

LOUIS. I thank you; but it is not our custom to turn our backs on sorrow.

[*With a helpless shrug* LEBRUN *retires.* JOSSELIN *comes to* LOUIS]

JOSSELIN [*Quietly*] My Lord Duke, dare I approach you with a petition?

LOUIS. Could you choose a better moment, my son?

JOSSELIN [*Indicating* JACQUELINE] For her.

LOUIS [*Gripping his hand*] I understand. Whatever of love or of life is left to me shall be hers.

[JOSSELIN *goes back to* JACQUELINE, *leaving* LOUIS *standing alone.* LOUIS *sees* URSULA'S *handkerchief, which she had dropped; stares at it; stoops to pick it up. The half-gate opens.* DUROZ *and* JACQUES *appear.* JACQUES, *however, exit at once towards R.*]

DUROZ. Louise Olonzac! [*He crosses rapidly to* GAUTIER] Lend me your men, Lieutenant. The mob is frenzied.

GAUTIER [*Quietly to him*] Well done. *Up* the street.

[*At a sign from him the Soldiers file out, and at* DUROZ'S *command thrust the* MOB *away from the gates, forming a line towards the left, up the street. As* LOUISE *is called* LOUIS *slowly rises, leaving the handkerchief lying. His face is distorted with agony. He has the utmost difficulty in mastering himself.* LOUISE *has risen from her knees. She is crossing with faltering steps towards her father; but* JACQUELINE *rushes to her in wild despair*]

JACQUELINE. You must not go! You shall not go! Oh, my Louise!

LOUIS [*To* JOSSELIN] For God's sake, take her away! [*To* LEBRUN] Take them to their cell.

[LEBRUN *holds open the cell door*]

JOSSELIN [*To* JACQUELINE, *taking her in his arms*] Jacqueline! Think of your child!

[*He gently separates her from* LOUISE, *and he and* LEBRUN *support her up the steps and through the little door. The* DUKE *and* LOUISE *stand locked in each other's arms*]

LOUISE [*Stroking* LOUIS' *cheek*] Dear! My heart breaks for you.

LOUIS. It will not be for long, my child.

LOUISE [*In a hushed whisper; frightened*] Father! Will it hurt?

LOUIS [*In anguish*] Hush! Hush! my darling.

LOUISE [*Dreamily*] I think we are in a nightmare, and we shall presently wake in the old house at Carcassonne.

LOUIS. Ah! Would to God!

DUROZ [*Opening the other wing of the gate, and with a gesture of understanding to* GAUTIER] Now, Lieutenant.

LOUISE [*Clinging to her father in sudden terror*] I am frightened!

GAUTIER [*Coming forward; very tenderly*] Mademoiselle——

LOUIS [*Holding* LOUISE *against his heart*] Judas!

LOUISE [*Stopping her father's mouth*] No! No! [*To* GAUTIER] My father forgives you—as I do.

[GAUTIER *offers to support her*]

LOUISE [*Sadly, motioning him away*] Ah, no! [*She kneels and kisses the* DUKE'S *hand. He is passive. He has come to the end of his strength.* LOUISE *rises*] You shall be proud of your child!

[*The* DUKE *does not answer. He is unconscious of his surroundings.* LOUISE *walks proudly towards the gate. A horrible yell greets her from the* MOB, *who tries to surge through the soldiers. At the sight of its fury* LOUISE *gives a cry and sways.* GAUTIER *seizes her in his arms, and, protected by* DUROZ, *rushes out, but turns sharply to the left, and is seen carrying her up the street.* DUROZ *and his men roughly prevent the crowd from following. Soldiers shut the*

gates with a crash. LOUIS *has seen nothing of this; but at the crash of the gates he throws up his arms in a wild gesture of despair, falls as if shot, and buries his face in* JOSSELIN'S *cloak, which, with his hat, is on the chair on which* JOSSELIN *last sat.* LOUIS *lies motionless awhile. Then he suddenly starts up, clutching the cloak. He looks at it, and at the hat. He peers round the room to make sure he is alone. He springs erect, with arms uplifted to heaven, and cries*]

LOUIS. My God! I thank Thee!

[*He becomes feverishly active. First he closes and locks the cell door. Then he picks up a playing card, hurries to* CHÉPY'S *table and writes: "Josselin—I am going to Louise—live for your wife and child—Olonzac." This he slips under the cell door. Now he wraps himself in* JOSSELIN'S *cloak, and thrusts the hat on deeply. He sits on the* JURY'S *platform, swaying impatiently, and muttering, "I am coming,* LOUISE; *I am coming." At this moment the tocsin rings wildly in the distance. Roll of drums. Distant cannon.* LOUIS *takes no notice. The gate opens and* JACQUES *bursts in. There is no crowd outside*]

JACQUES [*Calling*] Corporal Duroz! [*Amazed*] Not here? [*After glancing at a paper in his hand,*

looks at Louis] Josselin Bonassac, Count of Avantignan?

Louis [*Rising*] I am here.

Jacques. Thank the stars!

Louis. Are they all——?

Jacques. All but you. I nearly forgot you. You'll have an easy walk. The crowd's gone. Some excitement at the Hotel de Ville. Don't you hear the tocsin?

Louis. Come, sir; come!

[*Joyous shouts without*]

Jacques. What's that?

Louis [*Impatiently*] Must I go alone?

Jacques [*In great excitement; seizing* Louis' *arm*] Stop! Listen!

Shouts [*Increasing in volume*] Robespierre's shot! Robespierre's shot!

[*Cheers and yells*]

Jacques [*With joy*] Do you hear! Robespierre's shot!

Louis [*Dragging at him*] Come!

Shouts. Liberty! Set the prisoners free!

[*The gates are forced wide open. A frantic crowd is seen, laughing, singing and dancing outside. There are lanterns and torches.* Chépy *and* Renaud *are in the midst of the crowd, bound and gagged*]

Shouts. Set the prisoners free!

[*Men and Women rush in and grasp* LOUIS' *hands. Others unlock the cell door and swarm out through it*]

JACQUES [*Forcing the crowd away from* LOUIS] Make room! Give him air! Can't you see he's dazed?

[*The Crowd have torn off* LOUIS' *cloak and hat*]

Have you lost some one? Has this come too late?

LOUIS [*With indescribable grief*] No! Too soon! Too soon!

CURTAIN

ACT III

A large room in an old mansion in the Place des Vosges, Paris. There is an open fireplace down L. High up on the left is the entrance door to the apartment. A similar door faces it on the right. At the back are two tall windows giving on to the square and showing the tops of bare trees. About midway in the wall, R., is the service-door.

It is late afternoon on December 31st, 1805. There are unlighted candles in sconces against the wall. In the middle of the room is a round table with a coloured table-cloth and many books, papers, and maps. Over it a chandelier, hanging from the ceiling. A comfortable wing-chair is drawn up near the fire and facing the audience. There are five chairs round the table; the chair on the left is an arm-chair. The furniture is all severe and old.

TOINON, *now a handsome woman of thirty-three, is at work on worsted embroidery at the window.*

URBAIN, *now an old man of seventy-one, opens the entrance-door very cautiously. Seeing the room apparently empty, he enters. He is in a fur coat and a fur cap. He brings provisions in a basket.*

TOINON. Aha—Urbain?

URBAIN. Is the Master dressing?

TOINON. Yes; as if he were going to Court.

URBAIN. As if we were in seventeen-something, instead of eighteen-five!

TOINON. Don't remind me of my age.

URBAIN. Has General Duroz been here to-day?

TOINON [*Looks at him; then answers shortly*] No.

URBAIN. He'll come. *He*'ll come.

TOINON. It's no use. The master will have nothing to do with the Corsican's officers.

URBAIN. I know. Poor Mademoiselle Louise!

TOINON. Madame Gautier Lalance, if you please.

URBAIN. Married to one of the Corsican's officers! What a come-down!

[*There is a knock at the entrance-door and the rattle of a sabre*]

Oho! What are these martial sounds? What did I tell you?

[*He opens the door.* GENERAL DUROZ *stands in the doorway*]

DUROZ. Mamzelle Toinon in?

URBAIN. Sorry. Gone for a walk with the young man she's to marry.

DUROZ. Fire and fury!

TOINON. Come in, General.

DUROZ. Ah! [*He comes in*]

URBAIN. There, now! Spoilt my joke.

DUROZ [*To him*] You old scoundrel! Here's a bottle of brandy, nearly as old as yourself. To-morrow's New Year's Day, y'know.

URBAIN [*Taking it*] Thank you. You did look frightened, though, when I said——

DUROZ. Right about! 'Arrrch!

[URBAIN *goes out through the service-door, R., chuckling.* DUROZ *comes to* TOINON*; wants to kiss her*]

TOINON. None of that, now! You've no right here at all. You know the Duke won't see you.

DUROZ. But you will. And he will, in time. Is he at home?

TOINON. Yes. [*Pointing to the door, R., back*] He might come at any moment.

DUROZ. Good. Then he'd have to see me. [*He gets near her again*] Aren't you glad I found you?

TOINON [*Quickly slipping a skein of worsted over his hands*] Make yourself useful if you *will* stay. [*She unwinds the worsted*]

DUROZ. D'you know, I've never forgotten the first time I saw you. Ha! When you swaggered through the mob, with the cockade in your hair. Splendid!

TOINON. That horrible day!

DUROZ. D'you remember how Lalance brought the girl to you in a dead faint?

TOINON. I nearly died of fright.

DUROZ. You didn't show it. I was frightened out of my wits, too. If it hadn't been for Robespierre's death, we shouldn't be here.

TOINON. And the misery afterwards! Mademoiselle hovering six months between life and death! And we couldn't find her father.

DUROZ. What became of him?

TOINON. It seems they kept him in hospital—I don't know how long. He refuses to speak of it.

DUROZ [*Hushed*] Mad?

TOINON. Nearly. He thought Louise was dead, you know. The Count of Avantignan and I hunted for him; but, you see, we didn't know where to look. Then came the wars, and Monsieur Lalance had to go with his regiment; and Louise followed her husband in his campaigns.

DUROZ. Ay; with Napoleon! Upward, from glory to glory!—*I* was there!

TOINON. And one day I met Urbain marketing—and so I found my dear master again. I had great difficulty in convincing him his daughter was alive. He had a sort of fixed idea that he had *seen* her beheaded. It was terrible! And when, at last, he understood, and heard she was married to Captain Lalance, though he was dying to see her, he would not receive her husband. Ah! they were both stubborn; for she would not come without him.

DUROZ. Quite right, too.

TOINON. And then they wandered all over the world——

DUROZ. Yes. Napoleon covered a good bit of ground. What does the Duke live on?

TOINON. Your Napoleon has left him a couple of vineyards on the Rhone.

DUROZ. Ah! That's what I'm here to put right.

TOINON. He won't see you. [*The worsted is finished*] Thank you.

DUROZ. Oh, by the way, here's a present. New Year's gift. I couldn't bring it to-morrow. On

duty with his Imperial Majesty. [*He gives her a little box*]

TOINON. Thank you. [*Opens the box. Laughing*] Why, General, it's a wedding ring!

DUROZ. Clever of you to guess.

TOINON. But I'm not married.

DUROZ. No. But you're going to be.

TOINON. How exciting. And who's the bridegroom?

DUROZ [*At the salute*] Augustin-Philibert Duroz, General of the Imperial Guard, and Aide-de-Camp to his Majesty, the Emperor of the French.

TOINON. I don't think much of your joke, General. I, the humble housekeeper, married to a General!

DUROZ. I'm a General because I've got a bullet-proof hide and a sabre-proof head, and you're a dam' fine woman; and I've been in love with you ten years, and it's time that stopped; and so we must get married.

TOINON. I cannot leave my master.

DUROZ. Rubbish!

TOINON. General, if marrying me meant deserting the army and the Emperor, would you do it?

DUROZ. Eh? Of course I—what?—No; I'm damned if I would.

TOINON [*Laughing*] There you are.

DUROZ. But listen. The Duke won't need you. We're going to get him to Court. [*He seizes her and hugs her*] Oh, Toinon, how happy we shall be!

TOINON [*Laughing*] You Cossack!

[*A bell rings furiously*]

The master's bell! Slip to Urbain's room. I'll see what I can do.

DUROZ. One more.

TOINON [*Burlesquing him*] Right about! 'Arrrch!

[DUROZ *exit through the service-door, R.* TOINON *kisses the ring*]

[*Enter* LOUIS, *from his room, R., back. He is in full dress, but has thrown a dressing-gown over his clothes*]

LOUIS [*Peevishly*] Are you all dead, eh? I didn't ring for *you*. I rang for Urbain. Two rings: Urbain.

TOINON. Oh, my lord, there were so many rings, we got confused; and Urbain is very busy.

LOUIS. What's he busy with?

TOINON. The dinner is weighing on his mind.

LOUIS. I'll tell you what: Urbain is getting old.

TOINON. We are none of us getting younger, my lord.

LOUIS. But you and I don't show it. Come, now; quite frankly, if you saw me for the first time, what age should you give me? Come, now!

TOINON. Quite, quite frankly?

LOUIS. Certainly. Quite. [*He gets nervous*] Well—not *brutally*.

TOINON. I should take you for something between fif——

[*He starts*]

between forty and fifty.

LOUIS. And I'm sixty-seven. Ha! [*Slaps his chest; coughs*] Ho!

TOINON. Your lordship is an exception. [*She moves to go*] I will send Urbain.

LOUIS. Leave him alone. Think of the dinner! I only wanted to see a human face. I've been alone all day. Alone—with my memories.

TOINON. You will see some old friends to-night.

LOUIS. Josselin and Jacqueline? Yes, yes.

TOINON. And their little girl.

LOUIS. Their little girl. That was a disappointment, Toinon.

TOINON. What, sir?

LOUIS. It was to have been a boy.

TOINON [*Gently*] My lord, the other *is* a boy.

LOUIS. Eh? What other?

TOINON. Oh, sir, you know very well.

LOUIS [*Gently*] Mademoiselle Toinon, I had begged you never to mention that again.

TOINON. But on New Year's Eve——

LOUIS. Especially on New Year's Eve. Are my memories not sad enough on New Year's Eve, without——? I am not angry, Toinon. God knows I am grateful Mademoiselle Louise was saved; and you and Monsieur Lalance——

TOINON [*Reproachfully*] "Monsieur" Lalance!

LOUIS. That is the only title I can give him. You and Monsieur Lalance and Corporal Duroz——

TOINON [*Sharply*] General——

LOUIS. Eh?

TOINON [*Abashed*] Nothing, my lord.

LOUIS. You did a very brave thing. But Louise threw in her lot with those people—with the Corsican; she became a camp-follower! Pah!

TOINON. She thought—we all thought—you were dead. And she found the man she loved was loyal and brave. Could she have done anything else?

LOUIS. Mademoiselle, I am not arguing. I might have forgiven her for marrying her rescuer; but it is impossible for the Duke of Chastelfranc to receive an officer of the usurper; and as she will not come without him, there is an end of the matter. [*Sadly*] I will not say I do not suffer, but——

TOINON. My lord, there is an officer of the usurper in the house at this moment.

LOUIS [*With involuntary joy*] You do not mean——?

TOINON. I mean General Duroz.

LOUIS. Again! I have refused to see him three times.

TOINON. He will not take no for an answer.

LOUIS. And you have admitted him? How dare you? I say, how dare you?

TOINON. Urbain admitted him; and, after all, my lord, his name *is* Duroz.

LOUIS [*Walking up and down, impatiently*] His name is Duroz—his name is Duroz. What does he want? A reward for saving Louise?

TOINON [*Indignant*] Oh, my lord!

LOUIS. Where is he?

TOINON. In Urbain's room.

LOUIS. Ha! With his equal! He's the plague of my life. [*He rings twice*] I'll see him. I'll be done with him. What does the creature *want?*

TOINON. How should I know, my lord?

[*Enter* URBAIN, R.]

LOUIS. So, Master Urbain, you let anybody in who chooses to knock at my door?

URBAIN. Toinon asked him in, my lord.

LOUIS [*With a look at* TOINON] Ah? [*To* URBAIN] Send him to me.

[URBAIN *exit, R.*]

It seems I cannot trust either of you, Mademoiselle.

TOINON [*Reproachfully*] No?

LOUIS. What do you mean by saying "No" like that?

[URBAIN *shows in* DUROZ, *R., and vanishes*]

TOINON [*Mischievously*] Here is your guest, my lord.

[*She slips out, R.*]

LOUIS. My guest! [*To* DUROZ] So you force your way into private houses, sir?

DUROZ. By the Emperor's command.

LOUIS. As he has forced his way into palaces.

DUROZ [*Grinning*] He does get where he wants to, doesn't he?

LOUIS. You happen to be the man who saved my daughter——

DUROZ. One of them. I was too frightened to do much.

LOUIS. Very well. I am grateful. I thank you —General——

DUROZ. Augustin-Philibert Duroz, General of the Imperial Guard. Bullet at Aboukir, another at

Ulm; and a sabre-cut a month ago at Austerlitz; Aide-de-Camp to his Majesty, the Emperor of——

Louis [*Interrupting him*] You're a brave man. Good evening.

Duroz. Sorry. But, being here, I must deliver my message. The Emperor is getting impatient, and that's no joke.

Louis. The message shall come from me. Tell the—tell Monsieur Buonaparte I will hear his when he restores my estates which he has filched. Good evening.

Duroz. That's precisely what I was to say he's ready to do.

Louis [*Turning on his heel*] What?

Duroz. You can enter into possession whenever you like.

Louis. Are you in earnest?

Duroz. Will you allow me to speak confidentially, as soldier to soldier?

Louis [*Wistfully*] Oh! My soldiering is far behind me.

Duroz. The glory remains, Marshal. Austerlitz has not wiped out Rosbach or Prague.

Louis [*Immensely pleased*] Be seated.

[*They sit*]

Now, then.

Duroz. The Emperor is doing all he can to conciliate the old nobility.

Louis. With too much success.

Duroz [*Laughing*] Not much with you, Marshal.

LOUIS. I am loyal to my King.

DUROZ. Who is not very loyal to himself.

LOUIS. Pass on.

DUROZ. Napoleon admires you for your loyalty. Between ourselves, I believe he's a royalist at heart.

LOUIS. We all thought so at one time, and were correspondingly disappointed.

DUROZ. Well; the die is cast, and he's on the throne.

LOUIS. The King's.

DUROZ. And there is a Court.

LOUIS [*Laughing*] Such a Court!—Forgive me, General, but I have heard of the Imperial Court.

DUROZ. That's the point. That's why we're anxious to conciliate you; that's why we offer you your estates.

LOUIS. Aha! A condition? I thought so.

DUROZ. A pleasant one: and one that redounds to your honour.

LOUIS [*Very haughtily*] I should be curious to know——

DUROZ [*Looking round*] I can speak freely, I suppose? We're in a bad way. We have to receive Kings and Queens, and Chinese Ambassadors, and the Lord knows what all; and we don't know how. The Revolution wiped the slate, and nobody's left with any more idea than a rabbit of how a Court should be managed. The nobles who have rallied round us are not the pick of the basket, if you know what I mean. They were nobody in particular at the best of times, and their manners haven't improved by keeping.

LOUIS. They have probably been living in England.

DUROZ [*Exactly*] Take my own case: I have risen from the ranks.

LOUIS. That does you credit, General.

DUROZ. Yes; but I've got too high too quickly. I'm expected to do things, and I don't know what they are, or how to do 'em. Strictly between ourselves, it's the same with Napoleon. *He* isn't sure when he ought to stand up or sit down. Damned uncomfortable, that. His wife's no better. His brothers and sisters are simply awful! So when a King or a Prince comes, we are at our wits' ends. Then we get nervous. And then—— O Lord! [*He is now quite at his ease; he puts his hand familiarly on* LOUIS' *knee*] My dear Duke——

[LOUIS *looks at him, half amused*]

There! I suppose that was wrong?

LOUIS [*Grimly*] Go on.

DUROZ. Well, that's the sort of thing that happens all the time. Makes us sweat. That's why we want you.

LOUIS [*With a dangerous glitter*] You want me to—what?

DUROZ. Come to Court; keep an eye on us; keep us straight; tell us what to do. Your estates will be restored; you will have a brilliant position; four hundred thousand francs a year, paid quarterly; apartments; firing; and—— [*With importance*] Oh! and several new titles.

LOUIS [*Lies back in his chair, shaken with laugh-*

ter] Upon my soul. General, you've done me good!

DUROZ. Ah! You accept! The Emperor will be delighted.

LOUIS [*Still laughing*] One moment. Forgive me, but your delicious unconsciousness——

DUROZ [*Astonished*] Unconsciousness of what?

LOUIS [*Rising gravely*] Of the insult you have offered me.

DUROZ [*Springing to his feet*] My lord!

LOUIS [*Serious*] Because he is poor, you ask the Duke of Chastelfranc, whose ancestors led Crusades in the days of Saint Louis, who himself has fought for France wherever and whenever her cause was at stake, to come and be Master of the Ceremonies at your pinchbeck masquerade! You ask him to be head valet to a mob of Corsican upstarts who the day before yesterday tramped the streets of Marseilles in patched shoes, and did their own washing!

DUROZ [*Angrily*] My Lord Duke!

LOUIS [*Flashing at him*] Did they not? And you offer me a salary! And firing! *And* new titles! —I have done with laughter, General. Go back to your Emperor and tell him, Louis of Olonzac is not the man for his money. He can keep his four hundred thousand francs. If he can reconcile it with his conscience he can keep the estates he has robbed me of. He cannot buy me.

DUROZ. But that leaves you a poor man!

LOUIS. It leaves me as it found me, a lonely, poor, gentleman.

DUROZ [*After a short pause*] Damn it, it's

splendid! Will you allow me to shake your hand?

LOUIS. I am always proud to shake hands with a brave soldier.

[*They shake hands*]

DUROZ [*Saluting*] Marshal, I salute you.

LOUIS [*In his courtliest manner, pointing to the entrance-door*] General, this is the grand staircase.

DUROZ. Thank you. But I have left something in Urbain's room.

LOUIS [*With an ironic smile*] Ah? [*He opens the service door for* DUROZ *and calls*] Urbain!

[DUROZ *exit.* LOUIS *comes away from the door, leaving it open. In deep thought*]

A lonely, poor man. And old! A lonely, poor, old man!

[*Enter* URBAIN, R. *He has a large piece of paper in his hand*]

Ah! But I called you to show the General out.

URBAIN. Mademoiselle Toinon is doing that.

LOUIS. Why do you laugh?

URBAIN. I laugh at a General going down the back stairs.

LOUIS. It's the way his Emperor came up. [*As* URBAIN *lingers*] Well?

URBAIN [*Showing the paper*] The bill of fare, my lord, for to-night's banquet.

LOUIS. Ah. Let us hear it.

[*He sits in the arm-chair on the left of the round table*]

URBAIN [*Clears his throat, and reads in his grandest manner*] A dinner of four covers and six services. For the first service: Radishes and butter.

LOUIS. Yes?

URBAIN. For the second service: a Bisque of pigeons.

LOUIS. Very good.

URBAIN. For the third service: a Salmagundi of whitebait.

LOUIS [*Smacking his lips*] Ah!

URBAIN [*Confidentially*] I caught them. Gudgeons.

LOUIS. Oh!

URBAIN. For the fourth service: an Entrée of stewed partridges.

LOUIS. Admirable.

URBAIN. For the fifth service: a cold quail pie with a salad of Dandelions.

LOUIS. But—all birds?

URBAIN [*Confidentially*] All *pigeons*, my lord; they cost nothing. I caught them asleep in the Square! 'Tis the sauce matters.

LOUIS. Well—and for the sixth service?

URBAIN. Mushrooms, grown in our cellar.

LOUIS. I will not venture to criticise, but is there not a certain monotony?

URBAIN. The dinner costs one franc, my lord, for radishes, flour and butter; and I am not Monsieur Béchamel.

Louis. Poor Monsieur Béchamel! His last supper was never eaten.

Urbain [*Anxiously*] You must not think of that last night at Carcassonne, my lord.

Louis. How can I help thinking of it on New Year's Eve, Urbain?

Urbain. My lord approves of the dinner?

Louis. I do not disapprove. But I think it is fortunate for you that you will not have the Duchess's opinion or Béassac's. Béassac would have boggled at the quail-pigeon pie, Urbain. [*He sinks into musing*] All gone—all gone! And with them the grace and beauty of life; and all the pleasant wit and the courteous customs. We have waded through blood, to emerge common-place. [*He has forgotten* Urbain's *existence*] Louise—how dear she was; how graceful; with what an air she bore herself! And now she is the wife of a man like Duroz, who is content to go down the back stairs. And I! I offer my friends gudgeons and stolen pigeons——! a poor, lonely old man—and sad—and tired—very tired. [*He rests his head against the back of the chair; his eyes close*]

[*It is now dark.* Urbain *has crossed on tip-toe to the service door. Just as he is going to open it* Toinon *appears with a shaded lamp.* Urbain *motions her to silence*]

Urbain [*With his finger to his lips*] He is asleep!

Toinon [*Whispers*] But the company will be here!

URBAIN [*Pushing her out*] Sh! Sh!

[*He goes out, closing the door very softly behind him. Pitch darkness*]

LOUIS [*Half asleep*] The Company will be here. Monsieur Béchamel, display all your art. Béassac is critical. The Duchess is outspoken. [*With a touch of comedy*] And the poor Bishop! Think how he has fasted! Masterpieces, Béchamel!

[*The candles in the girandole over the table seem to kindle themselves slowly; but they burn with a pale, greenish, phosphorescent light.* URSULA, *the* DUCHESS, *the* BISHOP *and* BÉASSAC *are seen seated round the table.* LOUIS *is now asleep. He changes his attitude. He takes their presence as a matter of course*]

Are the quails to your liking, Duchess?——

[*The* BISHOP *points to the vacant places*]

What do you say, my lord? I cannot hear you. [*Peevishly*] I cannot hear you. We are a small company? There should be more? Ah, but the others did not go up the scarlet stairs with you—or through the steel gate.

[*The* DUCHESS *and* BÉASSAC *point to his dressing gown, and their faces are contorted into a grotesque laugh.* LOUIS *speaks with great*

pain—much greater than the occasion would warrant if he were awake]

I assure you I am in my court dress—but this gown—this gown—— [*His hands spasmodically move as if to take it off; but he can only sketch the movement*] I cannot get it off—I cannot reach it! Don't look at me so!—Béassac, we will drink to the King! [*He makes the gesture of filling his glass. He tries to rise, but that also is only a sketchy movement and only amounts to a stirring in his sleep*] This is a dream. I *know* I am dreaming.

[URSULA *stretches her arms out slowly in a gesture of entreaty*]

What, Ursula? *What* are you saying? If I could only hear! Louise? [*Gloomily*] No; not Louise; not Louise. You must not.

[*All the shadows appeal to him*]

I *will* wake! [*He struggles violently, with the effort of a man bound with ropes*] It is horrible! [*He gives a cry, which, if he were awake, would be a scream. Supported by the table, he does manage to lift himself a little out of the chair. The dream-figures all rise*] I am trying! You can see I am trying. I am trying to come up the scarlet stairs, but the steps slip away.

[*Real knocking at the entrance door. The dream-figures glide away from the table, but are still visible*]

Ay! hammer! hammer! There are carpenters under the window. They are hammering at a scarlet frame. They are fitting a steel knife!

[*Knocking; the dream-figures get further into the gloom*]

They are in a hurry, in a hurry: thousands are awaiting their turn; hurrying to join the King—but I—the steps fall away——! Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!

[TOINON *hurries in R. with her shaded lamp which she places on the table. The dream-figures are still vaguely seen.* LOUIS *is struggling in his sleep*]

TOINON [*As she enters*] My Lord! The Count and Countess!

LOUIS [*Only half awake: the figures grow fainter*] No! They are not of the company.

[*The candles fade as* TOINON *enters. There is only the dim light of the lamp*]

TOINON. For mercy's sake! Your dressing gown! [*She strips it off him*] Come in!

[*Enter, slowly, a Lady, an Officer, and a little boy*]

LOUIS [*Dazed and staggering*] Come! The others are——

TOINON [*With a great cry*] Merciful heavens! Look!

LOUIS [*Faces the newcomers like a drunken man. He cries*] Louise!

[*At that the dream-figures vanish:* LOUIS *is awake*]

LOUISE [*With a cry of joy*] Father! [*She rushes into his arms*]

LOUIS [*Rapturously folding her to his heart*] I am dazed! Am I still dreaming?

LOUISE. Dearest, dearest father!

[*Meanwhile* TOINON *is excitedly lighting the candles in the sconces*]

LOUIS. Real! Real! She's real! My darling! My heart's delight!

[*Emotional pause.* LOUISE *dashes the tears away. She points to* GAUTIER, *who has remained in the background, and speaks very earnestly*]

LOUISE. Father—my husband.

LOUIS [*Drawing himself up*] Monsieur Lalance——

LOUISE. No, no, father! [*Proudly*] This is Gautier Lalance, Marshal of France, and Commander of the Legion of Honour. The first on whom the Emperor conferred the star!

LOUIS [*Gravely; still holding* LOUISE *in his left*

arm] I knew you were a brave man, before you won that star, sir. If I were not taken by surprise I should have much to say. But I *am* taken by surprise, and [*with a sudden determination*] give me your hand, young man!

[*The two men grip hands*]

LOUISE [*Sobbing*] Oh, thank God! thank God!

[*Now she embraces* TOINON. TOINON *goes out, R.*]

GAUTIER [*To the boy*] Attention, Louis!

LOUIS [*Radiant*] Louis——!

GAUTIER. Speak thy little speech, as thy mother taught thee.

THE BOY [*With the utmost grace and courtly dignity, to* LOUIS] Thir, I am very much honou'ed to be able to call Marshal Louis of Olonzac, of Gaillac, Duke of Chathtelfwanc, my gwanfaver.

LOUIS [*In his finest manner*] Sir, the honour is entirely mine. [*He breaks down*] Oh, come to my heart!

[*The* BOY *leaps into his arms.* LOUIS *sits C., holding him on his knee*]

So thy name is Louis?

[LOUISE *and* GAUTIER, *who had been delighted, are now much alarmed*]

THE BOY. My name is Louis Na——

LOUISE [*Hastily*] His name is Louis.

THE BOY [*Persisting*] Yeth, but——

LOUISE. Hush! Hush!

GAUTIER. Let be.

LOUIS [*To the* BOY] Well?

THE BOY [*With great pride*] My name is Louis-Napoléon.

LOUIS [*Pained; letting the* BOY *slip off his knee*] Ah——

THE BOY [*Putting his arms round the old man's neck*] After the two gweatetht men my faver knows.

LOUIS [*Delighted, hugging the* BOY] Thou—thou little cabbage.

GAUTIER [*Wiping his brow*] Ouf! That was worse than Rivoli.

LOUIS [*To the* BOY] But I shall call thee Louis, for short.

GAUTIER. I have good news for you, my lord. His Imperial Majesty——

[*Movement from* LOUIS]

Briefly: your estates are restored to you.

LOUIS [*Stern again*] I have refused them, sir.

LOUISE [*Gently*] Father, you cannot refuse, for Gautier has bought them and paid for them.

LOUIS [*With haughty surprise*] I do not understand you, Madam.

[LOUISE *lifts* GAUTIER'S *cloak; he has lost his left arm*]

LOUIS. Ah!

LOUISE. You take your own from [*holding up* GAUTIER's *remaining hand*] this hand.

LOUIS [*Touching* GAUTIER's *empty sleeve*] Marshal, that is a patent of nobility which even I cannot match. [*He seizes* GAUTIER's *hand*] I can take what you offer, in trust for you.

[JOSSELIN *and* JACQUELINE *burst in at the entrance door with a delightful little girl. The two children at once rush at each other. Ultimately they nestle together in the big wing-chair, with their arms round each other's necks*]

JACQUELINE [*Impulsively*] Is it all over?

LOUISE [*Pointing to* LOUIS *and* GAUTIER] Look!

LOUIS [*In high good humour*] Ah! It was a conspiracy!

JOSSELIN. And it has not failed! [*He shakes hands with* GAUTIER]

LOUIS. Alas! I am the past! What is the use of my fighting against so eager a present, or [*pointing to the children*] so smiling a future?

[*Enter* TOINON, *R., with a tray full of glasses, which she puts on the table. She is followed by* URBAIN, *who carries a magnum of champagne embraced in both arms*]

LOUISE. Urbain!

URBAIN [*Crying*] Don't speak to me, Mamzelle, or I shall drop this; and it's the best.

LOUIS. Pour it out quickly, old friend.

[URBAIN *sends the cork flying. To* TOINON, *laughing*]

Ho! You have brought one glass too many!

TOINON [*Embarrassed*] General Duroz would like to salute Marshal Lalance.

[GAUTIER *shows pleasure*]

LOUIS [*Cordially*] Have him in.

[DUROZ *was waiting at the door. He comes in at once and stands at the salute.* LALANCE *returns his salute. Then they shake hands*]

[URBAIN *has poured out the wine. All, including* URBAIN *and* TOINON, *take glasses*]

LOUIS. I drink [*He bows to the children; they slip off the chair, and stand hand in hand*] to the Future of France.

[*A sudden roll of drums outside.* GAUTIER *and* DUROZ *draw themselves up and salute*]

LOUISE [*Alarmed; to* JACQUELINE] The Emperor!

LOUIS [*Very solemnly*] God save the King!

CURTAIN

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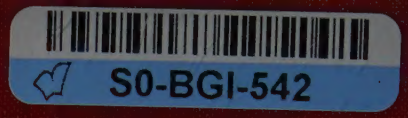
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